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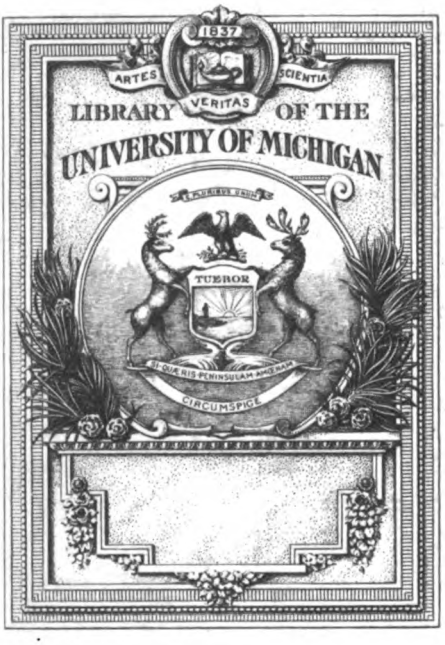
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THE

STRAND MAGAZINE

An Illustrated Monthly

Vol. LXV

JANUARY TO JUNE

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1923

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QUEL TO THE BLUE LAGOON STARTS THIS MONTH

THE STRAND MAGAZINE

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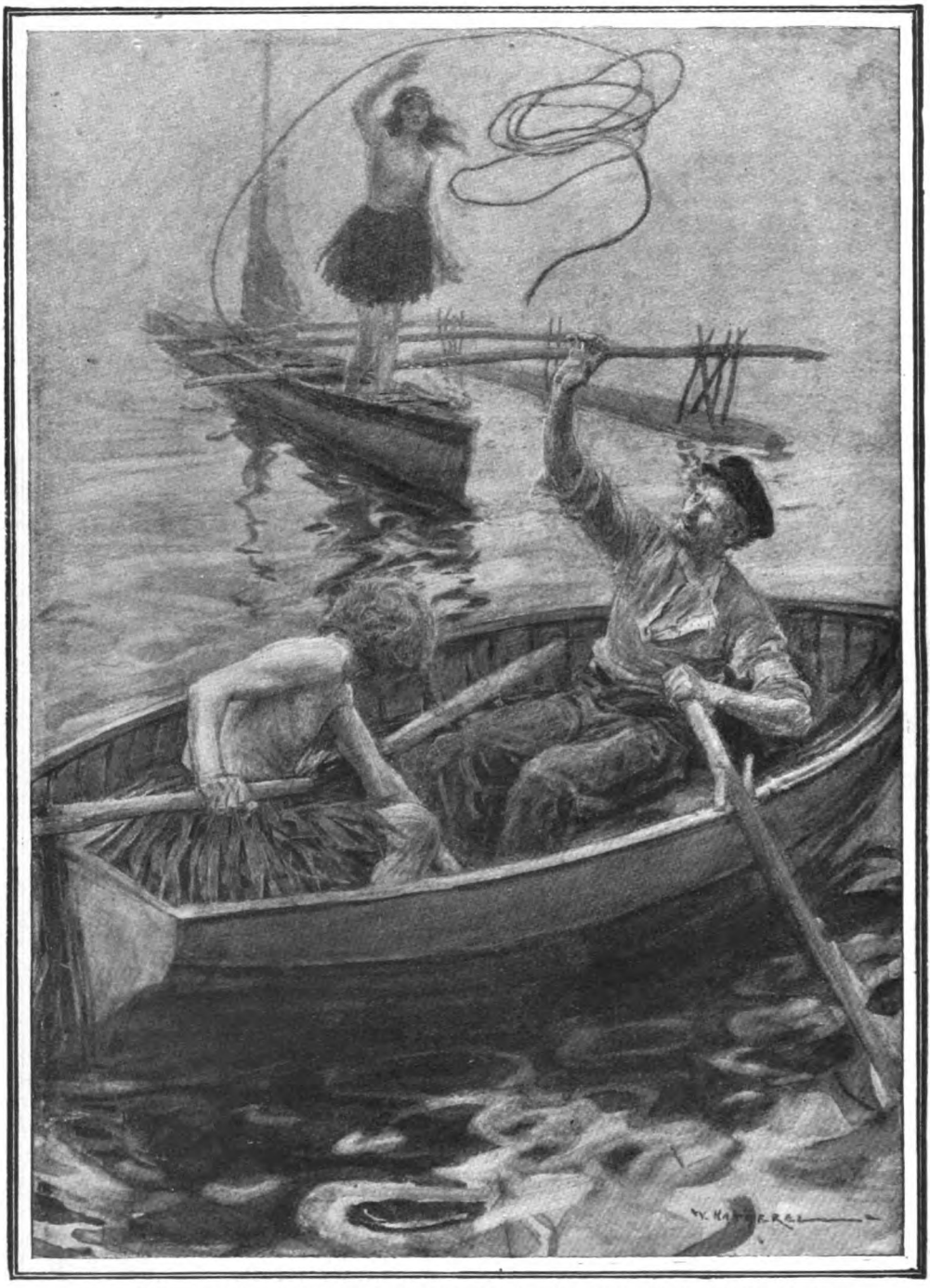

THE GIRL STOOD WITH THE ROPE COILED IN HER HAND, AND AS THE DINGHY APPROACHED SHE SENT THE COIL FLYING TOWARDS THEM, STRAIGHT AND SURE.

(See page 18.)

The Garden of God

A SEQUEL TO "THE BLUE LAGOON"

By

H. deVERE STACPOOLE

ILLUSTRATED BY
W. HATHERELL, R.I.

FOREWORD.

Readers of "The Blue Lagoon" will recall that it described the casting ashore on an uninhabited isle in the South Seas of two children, Dick and Emmeline Lestrange—the son and niece of Arthur Lestrange. They grew up together in a wild, uncivilized state, fell in love, and drifted out to sea in a dinghy with their child. About the same time Lestrange, after years of searching, had at last learned of their whereabouts and was fast approaching the island in the *Raratonga*. This story opens at the moment when he comes across the drifting dinghy.

BOOK I.

THE CHILD.

I.

"NO," said Lestrange, "they are dead." The whale-boat and the dinghy lay together, gunnels grinding as they lifted to the swell. Two cable-lengths away lay the schooner from which the whale-boat had come; beyond and around from sky-line to sky-line the blue Pacific desolate beneath the day.

"They are dead."

He was gazing at the forms in the dinghy, the form of a girl with a child embraced in one arm, and a youth. Clasping one another, they seemed asleep.

A predatory gull, far above, wheeling and slanting on the breeze, had followed the dinghy for hours, held away by the awful and profound knowledge, born of instinct, that one of the castaways was still alive. But it still hung, waiting.

"The child is not dead," said Stanistreet. He had reached forward and, gently separating the forms, had taken the child from the mother's arms. It was warm, it moved, and as he handed it to the steersman, Lestrange, almost upsetting the boat, stood up. He had glimpsed the faces of the dead people. Clasping his head with both hands and staring at the forms before him, mad, distracted by the blow that Fate had suddenly dealt him, his voice rang out across the sea:—

"My children!"

Stanistreet, the captain of the schooner—Stanistreet, who knew the story of the lost children so well, knelt aghast just in the position in which he had handed the child to the sailor in the stern sheets.

The truth took him by the throat. It must be so. These were no Kanakas drifted to sea—the dinghy alone might have told him that;

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these were the children they had come in search of, grown, mated, and—dead.

His quick sailor's mind reckoned rapidly. The island they were making for in hopes of finding the long-lost ones was close to them, the northward-running current would have brought the dinghy, some inexplicable sea-chance had drifted them from shore; they were here, come to meet the man who had sought them for years—what a fatality!

Lestrange had sunk as if crushed down by some hand. Taking the girl's arm, he drew it towards him. "Look!" he cried, as if speaking to High Heaven. "And my boy—oh, look! Dick—Emmeline—oh, God! my God! Why? Why? Why?

He dashed his head on the gunnel. Far away above the great gull watched.

It saw the whale-boat making back for the schooner with the dinghy in tow, it saw the forms it hungered for taken on board, it saw the preparations on deck and the bodies of the lost ones committed to the deep. Then, turning with a cry, it drifted on the wind and vanished, like an evil spirit, from the blue.

II.

IT was just on daybreak, and the *Raratonga*, running before an eight-knot breeze, was boosting the star-shot water to snow.

Bowers, the bo'sun, an old British Navy quartermaster, was at the wheel, and Stanistreet, the captain, had just come on deck.

"Gentleman goin' on all right, sir?" asked Bowers.

"Mr. Lestrange is still asleep, and thank God for it," said Stanistreet; "and the child's well. It woke, and I gave it a pannikin of condensed and water, and it's in the starboard after bunk, asleep again."

Stanistreet snuffed out the binnacle light; the day was now strong; the wind tepid, yet fresh from a thousand miles of ocean, bellying the sails, golden in the level sun-blaze.

The thought of Lestrange was troubling him. Lestrange, since yesterday, had fallen into a sleep profound as though Nature had chloroformed him. As a matter of fact she had, but the cruelty of Nature lies in the fact that she uses her anæsthetics after instead of during the operations performed by Fate.

Leaning on the rail, the captain spat at the gold-tinged foam as though to get some bitter taste from his mouth.

Then came the thought, had he done right in holding on south for the island since yesterday? What would be the effect on Lestrange of the traces surely left there by the children?

He was thinking this when from below came a sound. Someone was moving about in the saloon, and Stanistreet, taking his courage in both hands, turned to the cabin-hatch and went below.

HE entered the saloon.

The place was gay with the morning beams shining through the ports and skylight. Lestrange, who had been looking into the starboard after bunk, turned, and as the two men came face to face Stanistreet saw at once that his fears were groundless. Lestrange had quite recovered himself.

"We are still keeping south?" said Lestrange.

"Yes," said the captain. "I carried on. I thought it best, but what's your wishes in the matter?"

"South," said Lestrange. "Come up on deck. I want to talk to you."

Stanistreet followed closely, and when Lestrange walked to the port rail and stood with his hands upon it fronting the blazing east, the captain of the *Raratonga* came and stood beside him.

"Listen," said Lestrange. "For twelve long years, as you know, I sought for the children I loved, always sure that they were alive, always uncertain as to their fate. I prayed that I might meet the children again, I prayed and prayed, and searched and sought, and yesterday my prayer was granted.

"My children were handed back to me by a merciful God—but they were dead! What a mockery! What an answer to the humble and heartfelt prayer of one of His poor creatures! Yesterday, as I lay broken in the cabin below whilst you were committing them to the deep, I blasphemed His name, whilst He sat smiling in the Infinite. He who knows all things and does all things right.

"Listen. I fell asleep, and grief drove me beyond sleep into a world of visions, where I met the children. It was no dream. I saw them as I see you. I have seen the children and I am to see them again, for they are about to return."

"Return!"

"Yes, return. They have told me the place but not the time. I am to go to the island, and they will come to me. I am to wait for them, and they will come to me."

He turned from the rail and went below. Stanistreet saw the steward come along with breakfast things—the *Raratonga* had a deck galley—and vanish down the cabin-hatch; then he heard the voice of a child and the voice of Bowers, as if talking to it.

A minute later he reappeared with the "kid" wrapped in a bunk-blanket and clasped in one huge arm.

Plump, brown as a berry, auburn-haired and laughing, it was a very different child from the child that had come aboard yesterday.

"It pulled me beard," said Bowers. "It's as strong as Ham, b'gosh! There, out you get and play in the sun where you're used to."

He turned the naked child out of the blanket on to the deck.

Presently, when he was leading the child

He filled the bath with sea-water and began the scrubbing and sponging, Jim standing by with the towel, and the others looking on.

away from the companion-hatch, Lestrange reappeared and joined Stanistreet near the wheel. Lestrange glanced at the sailor and his charge, but seemed to take little interest in it, or only that benign interest which he seemed now to bestow on everything animate and inanimate; it might have been the child of Bowers for all he seemed to care.

III.

MEANWHILE the fo'c'sle had got wind of happenings on deck, and even the watch that had turned in, turned out,

"Now then, now then," cried Mr. Bowers. "scatter off an' clean yourselves. Jim, fetch me that old tin bath tub outa the galley, and tell Jenkins to send's a tow'l."

He filled the bath with sea-water dipped up in a bucket, and began the scrubbing and sponging, Jim, a long, lantern-jawed son of perdition, standing by with the towel, and the others looking on.

"What's his name ?" asked Jim.

"Name!" cried Bowers. "How the blazes do you think I know what his name is ? Hasn't got one——" Then, as an afterthought, "Dick's his name, isn't it, bo ? Dick, hey ? Dick, ain't that your name, hey ? "

"Dick," repeated the laughing child, splashing the water. "Dick ! Dick ! "

"And Dick you'll be," said Bowers, with a last squeeze of the sponge, baptismal in its significance, though such a thought was far from the mind of the baptizer. "Now, hold me the tow'l—and there you are."

He finished off the drying and released the child, who at once made for Jim, of all people in the world, clasped him round the legs with his chubby little arms, and looked up in his face. Innocence adoring the biggest blackguard that ever footed Long Wharf.

Then Stanistreet appeared from the saloon hatch and the fo'c'sle crowd melted, all but Jim.

"So Dick's your name, is it ? " said Jim, unclasping the tiny hands and lifting the kid in his arms; "and what's your other name ? Tell's your other name or up ye go over the rail, up ye go over the rail." He danced the child in his arms, making pretence to throw it overboard.

"Em," cried Dick, the warm arms of Jim maybe waking in his misty mind the name of Emmeline, who had danced him so often. "Em —Em."

"And Dick M you'll be if you wants to," said that worthy as he hoisted him on his shoulder and went aft in search of Jenkins, the steward, and condensed milk.

Seven bells had struck when along the blazing deck came the voice of the look-out, plaintive as the voice of a gull.

"Land ho-o-o ! "

It was Ericsson the Swede who gave the cry, and Stanistreet, pacing the deck, hands behind his back, suddenly became galvanized into activity. He sprang with one foot on the port bulwarks and a hand clutching the main ratlins, then, shading his eyes with the other hand, he looked.

Yes, it was the island, far, far away, but surely there, the thing unmapped, uncharted, known only to the gulls and the whalemen, and even to the whalemen scarcely known.

Lestrange had come on deck. He took the news from Stanistreet, walked forward a bit, and then, with arm upon the starboard rail, he stood and watched.

And now, minute by minute, rising like Aphrodite from the sea, the island before them bloomed to life. With every lift of the swell, the gull-strewn barrier reef showed its foam, whilst ever more distinctly beyond the reef, green and fair, grew the foliage, changing in depth of emerald to the touch of the wind.

A moment more the *Raralonga* held on, then as the wheel went over to the rattle of the rudder-chains, the main boom swung, hung for a moment supported by the topping lifts, and then lashed out to port, the bowsprit pointing straight for the break in the reef.

Lestrange, his hand on the starboard rail, stood with his eyes fixed on the vision before him—the home of his children. He had never dreamed of anything like this ; all his visions of paradise fell to dust before what he saw, what he heard, what he felt, as the schooner, heeling to the wind, made like an arrow for the break ; and now, in one miraculous moment, the break was passed and the great sea was gone—transformed into a silent lake of azure.

IV.

THE *Raralonga* on a level keel and spilling the wind from her sails came round in a grand curve on the dazzling water, her great shadow following her across the coral gardens of the lagoon floor, then the rumble of the anchor-chain echoed and passed away in the woods, and ship and shadow swung slowly to the tide and came to rest.

Stanistreet moved beside Lestrange, who turned, his face lit as if with the reflection of all the beauty around.

"Well, sir," said the captain, "we're in harbour at last. Shall I order the shore boat out ? "

"Yes," said the other, turning again to the rail. "Yes—but look, Stanistreet, look ! "

"It's fine ! " said the sailor. "I never struck a prettier bit of beach—aye, it's grand ! "

"It is the Garden of God," said Lestrange. "He made it and He has kept it in all the wide world the one spot undefiled. He made it and He kept it for my children, and now He has led me to it that I should meet them once again, and, dying, praise His name."

The boat touched the sand where wavelets were breaking scarce a foot high, and Stanistreet, getting out, helped Lestrange over the gunnel.

"Take her back," said the captain to the fellow who had been rowing stern oar; "you can stream her on a line. I'll signal when I want you."

Stanistreet, turning from the sea, cast his eyes about. The extraordinary thing was that the mind of the sailor was perturbed, anxious,

eager for any traces of the children, whilst the mind of Lestrange seemed absolutely at peace. They walked towards the trees.

Just before entering the shadow of the trees Stanistreet paused. His quick eye had noticed something lying on the sand a little to the left. A great banana bunch half eaten by the birds, half ruined by the sun · something that must have lain there for days, and got there—how ?

He bent to examine it. The stalk had been cut with a knife.

Straightening himself he found that Lestrange had noticed the fact.

" Look," said Lestrange, " it has been cut. Dick must have cut it from the tree, but there are no banana trees round here. Let us go on."

Lestrange was following a path that led uphill.

Here, over the face of an age-worn rock, a little cascade flashed, to lose itself amidst the ferns, and above, like great candelabra, stood the banana trees holding their full-ripe fruit to the sky.

" Look ! " said Lestrange. He was pointing to a bunch of the fruit that had been cut and thrown down, and was lying close to the ferns ; then he pointed to a diamond-trunked artu close to them on the left. A knife was sticking in the tree, left there by the banana-cutter—till his return.

Lestrange walked up close to the tree, glanced at the knife, and, without touching it, led the way on, past the waterfall, uphill, and as if sure of his ground.

" Look ! " said Lestrange. He was pointing to the west, to a place where the trees broke towards the lagoon bank, leaving an open space green to the water. " Can you not see their house ? "

" I see nothing," replied the sailor, shading his eyes against the sun.

" There, by the clearing ; the shadow of the trees has taken it ; not far from the water's edge, close to that tree-cluster that stands out a bit in to the open."

Close to the left-hand belt of trees and with a little garden beside it where taro grew, it stood, leaf-thatched and built of cane. It had no door. The light of evening entered, exposing all the simple contents, mats carefully and neatly rolled up, a shelf where stood bowls cut from coconut-shell, a ball of twine, an old pair of scissors—all arranged neatly and in order. Some fish-spears stood leaning against a corner, and in a small bowl at the extreme end of the shelf some flowers, once bright, but now withered. Yet, for all the cunning of the construction, the house had an unfinished look, as though the builders had been called away before its full completion.

Lestrange stood before the open door of the house, so trustful, so naive, so like a nest, this house built by the lost children whose forms he had seen but a day ago, whose voices he had not heard for so many years. It was the sight of the neatly rolled mats, the bowl of withered flowers, and the carefully-arranged things on the shelf that shattered for a moment the great contentment born of his vision and the surety that he was to meet the children soon. These things said " Emmeline " as plainly as a voice, Emmeline so neat, so careful of things, so fond of flowers.

He broke down, and leaning his arm against the doorpost hid his face.

Stanistreet turned on his heel and walked rapidly down to the lagoon edge ; he was hit nearly as badly as Lestrange. He stood for a long while to give the other time to recover, then he turned.

Lestrange had recovered. He was standing before the house with one of the fish-spears in his hand, examining it. Stanistreet walked up to him.

" Look," said Lestrange, " how cleverly he has made the barbs ; he was always clever with his hands."

He placed the spear back where he had found it, and then, with a last look at the house, turned away.

" Come," said he, " we must get back to the ship, for there is much to be done before she sails, and I want her to sail to-morrow. I will go to her with you now and return in the morning."

" Return ? " said Stanistreet. " Are you not going with us ? "

" I shall never see San Francisco again," replied Lestrange. " My home is here with my children who are coming to meet me, who have met me, for I feel them on either side of me. I cannot see them yet, but they will show themselves to me in time."

Stanistreet made no reply for a moment. " And the child ? " said he at length.

" Their child will remain with me," said Lestrange.

JIM KEARNEY, long, red-headed, and lantern-jawed, was enlisted the third inhabitant of the Garden of God.

Stanistreet had pointed out to Lestrange the impossibility of the schooner putting out that day. Stores had to be landed, and not only landed, but brought round to the house, away at the other side of the lagoon.

Lestrange did not want stores, and Kearney, who was a small eater for all his size and strength, and who in these latitudes was indifferent to meat, only wanted tobacco. All the same, the captain of the *Raratonga* had his own ideas on the subject. A cask of flour was broken out of the hold, the medicine chest was ransacked of pain-killer, opium, and Epsom salts ; needles, threads, scissors, carpenter's tools, lines and fish-hooks—nothing was forgotten.

A shack had to be run up in the trees behind the house to hold the stores, and it was not till the morning of the third day that all was finished.

The old dinghy was overhauled and condemned, but Lestrange wished to keep it, so it was left. together with the dinghy of the *Raratonga*, for practical purposes, and they were towed round by the whale-boat to the sward by the house and tied up to the bank.

It was eleven o'clock in the morning when all was finished. Dick was playing about on the sward in the sun under the eye of Kearney, pipe in mouth and hands in pockets, and Lestrange was saying good-bye to his skipper.

" Well, sir," said Stanistreet, " I don't think we've forgotten anything, and I've got your orders safe in mind and pocket—and——" He held out his hand and gripped that of the other.

" Good luck," said Lestrange, taking his place in the boat.

Just before rounding the cape to the right the oars came in and the crew, scrambling to their feet, gave a cheer that roused the echoes in the trees. Then the boat passed away for ever beyond the cape.

V.

NEXT night Lestrange, asleep in the house, was awakened by a booming sound, measured and rhythmical, that filled the night like the solemn beating of a great drum.

He rose and, passing the sleeping child, came out on the sward.

Kearney was out and standing in the moonlight, shading his eyes and staring towards the sea.

" It's breakers on the reef, sir," cried the sailor. " Lord ! Look at it ! "

Away over the reef the spray was flying to the even-spaced and ever-loudening thunder of the great rollers. The reef seemed on fire and fuming under the moon. whilst jets of spindrift rose like sheeted ghosts from the hurricane seas bursting on the outer beach, rose and dissolved and vanished in an atmosphere windless and still as crystal.

It was the dead calm of the night that made the vision appalling, together with the fact that the anger of the sea was still rising. Above the sheeting spray the gulls were flying wildly in the moonlight, and above their voices louder and louder came the thunder of the breakers.

The woods were now echoing to the sound of it, and now, like a line of crystal above the reef, showed the head of the first breaching wave.

It broke in snow and smoke, sheeting into the lagoon, and was followed by two others. That was the climax ; as the terror came so it went, dying gradually down till at last nothing was left but the old eternal murmur of the surf.

" Well," said Kearney, " that beats all. Earthquake ? No, sir. I'm thinking there's been some big storm up north there, one of them cyclones, and the push of it has come down pilin' up against tide an' current. Lord help the schooner if she's met it ! The sea's big still ; listen to that surf ; shall us run over to the reef, sir, and have a look ? "

On the outer beach the rollers were still coming in, no longer gigantic, yet great, marching beneath the moon to break in thunderbursts that seemed ruled by the beat of a metronome.

Marching from the north, where, against the sunset of the day before,the sails of the *Raratonga* had passed from sight beyond the sea-line.

BOOK II.

THE CHILDREN RETURN.

I.

FOR weeks after that night, Kearney, though busy and contented enough, was possessed by the uneasy feeling that maybe they were marooned for good and all. If the *Raratonga* never came back, why, then, God help them ! It might be years before a ship came along.

Working in the patch of yams, fishing, or what-not, he worried over this business in private ; not caring to speak of it to Lestrange, he sometimes spoke of it to Dick. Dick, almost as dumb as a dog, had words, but no use for connected speech as yet ; sometimes thoughtful, nearly always busy, the child seemed to live a life of his own. and, though fast friends with the man, was quite happy when left by himself.

Sometimes the man would take him out in the dinghy when he went fishing and Lestrange was otherwise employed, and the child with its chin over the gunnel would watch without a word, or crooning to itself while the bright-coloured fish passed or nosed the bait.

" Aye, them's big fish," said Kearney one morning, as three gropers went by in line of battle and vanished into the world of crystal beyond. " Hallo ! " a rock cod had taken the bait ; he hauled it fighting on board. and as it floundered on the bottom boards Dick caught it in his chubby hands.

" Fish ! " said Dick.

" Aye, now you're talking," said the other, pleased to hear the word he had uttered repeated back to him, and holding up the fish with a finger through the gills.

He handed the fish to the child, who, clutching

it by the tail and through the gills, placed it carefully in the shadow of the thwart where the sun could not get at it.

" Well, I'm damned," said Kearney to himself. If Dick had suddenly made a long oration in Latin the sailor could not have been very much more surprised than he was at this revelation of care and forethought. It was like a flash of light revealing the child's upbringing, and the fact that the people of the wild begin their education in the school of necessity, which is not a school of languages.

He rebaited and dropped his hook, talking to the child as he did so.

" Did your daddy teach you that, eh ? Well, you're a cleverer chap than I thought—don't be tanglin' the line ; there, you can hold it if you want." He let the little hand clutch the line without leaving go of it himself and they fished in partnership, Dick between his knees and helping to haul in the catches. But from that day he began to take a different and more lively interest in the child, and as the weeks passed the bother about the *Raratonga* began to fade ; there was no use in bothering, for one thing, and for another the island life was beginning to clutch him.

During the first few months Lestrange's mind was so busy, so intrigued with the new surroundings, so intent on completing the house, clearing the yam-patch of weeds, and finishing what the lost children had left undone, that time passed as it passed for Kearney ; then, gradually, and as though time were losing the feathers of his wings one by one, the days began to lengthen for Lestrange.

He talked little nowadays and his face had lost something of that other-world look, but what he said was always definite and to the point ; his manner was more normal, and if the sailor had been questioned as to his condition, he would have given it as his opinion that the gentleman was " coming round."

II.

ONE day, moved by a spirit of restlessness, Lestrange went off by himself through the woods, making towards the hill-top. It was the first time he had gone there alone, and when he reached the great boulder that crowned the rise he climbed it. Resting on its upper face he looked far and wide across the sea, northward where the *Raratonga* had vanished and westward where the sun would vanish that evening, the vast blue sea so beautiful from here, the sea that had taken his children—for ever.

These were days when the horizon was not, the azure of sea dimming off into a luminous haze flowing up to the blue of sky.

Lestrange, with his eyes fixed on the sea-line, seemed fallen into a dream ; then, slowly recovering himself, he rose from his half-recumbent position, climbed down the rock, and began the descent of the hill-side

To reach the sward he had to pass through a bad patch where the ground was moist and where things grew with a luxuriance unknown on any other part of the island ; trees living, trees dead and rotting, unknown sappy plants and cables of liantasse, rope convolvulus, and python lianas made this place difficult ; the air was like the air of a conservatory, and to lose oneself here would be easy, but it had never troubled him—his sense of direction was keen and the slight downhill trend of the ground was guide enough.

There was about this place the vague uncanny something that clings to the rooms of an old deserted house. One felt oneself closed in, yet not alone.

Here, as on the other side of the island, there was a little stream, a thing scarcely a foot broad, that passed chuckling, half hidden by ground-leaves and making on either side of it a zone of marsh. Lestrange was stepping across this stream when something clutched the side of his coat. It was as if a tiny hand had been put out to draw him back. It was only a thorn-branch, a green tendril armed with thorns an inch long curved like the claws of a cat.

He disentangled it and passed on, reaching the valley where the great stone blocks lay strewn about and where the idol of many centuries ago lay amidst the ferns ; the thing that had once been a god, omnipotent in the minds of a people long vanished.

Here, to rest himself, he sat down on a boulder and, leaning forward with his elbows on his knees and his chin in the cup of his hands, fell into a reverie.

The name he had given to this island came back to him as he sat there surrounded by those ruins, perhaps two thousand years old. " The Garden of God."

An hour later, when Lestrange was seated by the house door reading a book, Dick, who had given up imitation fish-spearing and had fetched some toys from his *cache*, took his place on the sward near by. Lestrange, who had taken more notice of the child in the last few days, watched him for a bit and then relapsed into his book.

Dick was busy for a while and the clink of oyster shells and bits of coral kept the reader aware of the fact. Then he ceased play and Lestrange, looking up again from his book, saw before him, seated on the sward, Emmeline.

THE child, having lost interest in its play, was seated with hands folded gazing away across the lagoon, gazing wide-pupilled beyond the world, just as Emmeline had often sat, caught away suddenly into day-dream-land. The folded hands were the hands of Emmeline, and the attitude of the body, and, just in that moment, the expression of the face was as if the shade of little Emmeline's sweet soul had reappeared vaguely braving the glances of the sun.

This was no illusion, the likeness was there, evanescent, independent of feature, yet distinct.

Then, as Lestrange gazed on this wonder which was yet so commonplace, it passed away. Kearney broke from the trees on the opposite side carrying a bunch of bananas he had been to fetch, and Emmeline, sighting him, vanished—turned, as if touched by a magic wand, into Dick, who went running towards the sailor across the sward.

III.

IN the days that followed, watching closely now, he saw that not only had heredity given the child the attributes of the mother, but of the father. Perhaps to the absolute isolation of the parents from the world was due this more than ordinary duplicity and simplicity of mind-structure in the child; he could not tell, but the fact was there. Racing about like a dog, following Kearney, imitating him in the things he did, the child was the Dick of long ago, different somewhat in face, but Dick to the life; tired of play or seized with a fit of day-dreaming, Emmeline would peep forth—even in play, sometimes, Lestrange would notice the characteristics of the mother in the child's love for coloured things, flowers, bits of coral and bright shells, and in the careful way the toys would be collected and hidden.

Sometimes so vivid was the impression that he could have thrown out his arms and cried "Emmeline," only that he knew Emmeline would know him not.

One night the strange thought came to him: "Do children really care? Did Dick and Emmeline long ago love me? Have I been all these years breaking my heart for the loss of two beings who, caring for me after their way, had no enduring love, were incapable of enduring love—being children?"

Lestrange, casting his mind years back and with his eyes made clear by this new revelation, tried to remember any one instance that would show him Dick or Emmeline's special love for him—he could not.

"DICK," cried Kearney "kim along, *atsy!* That's no way to be gettin' into a boat. Now set steady and give over handlin' them spears."

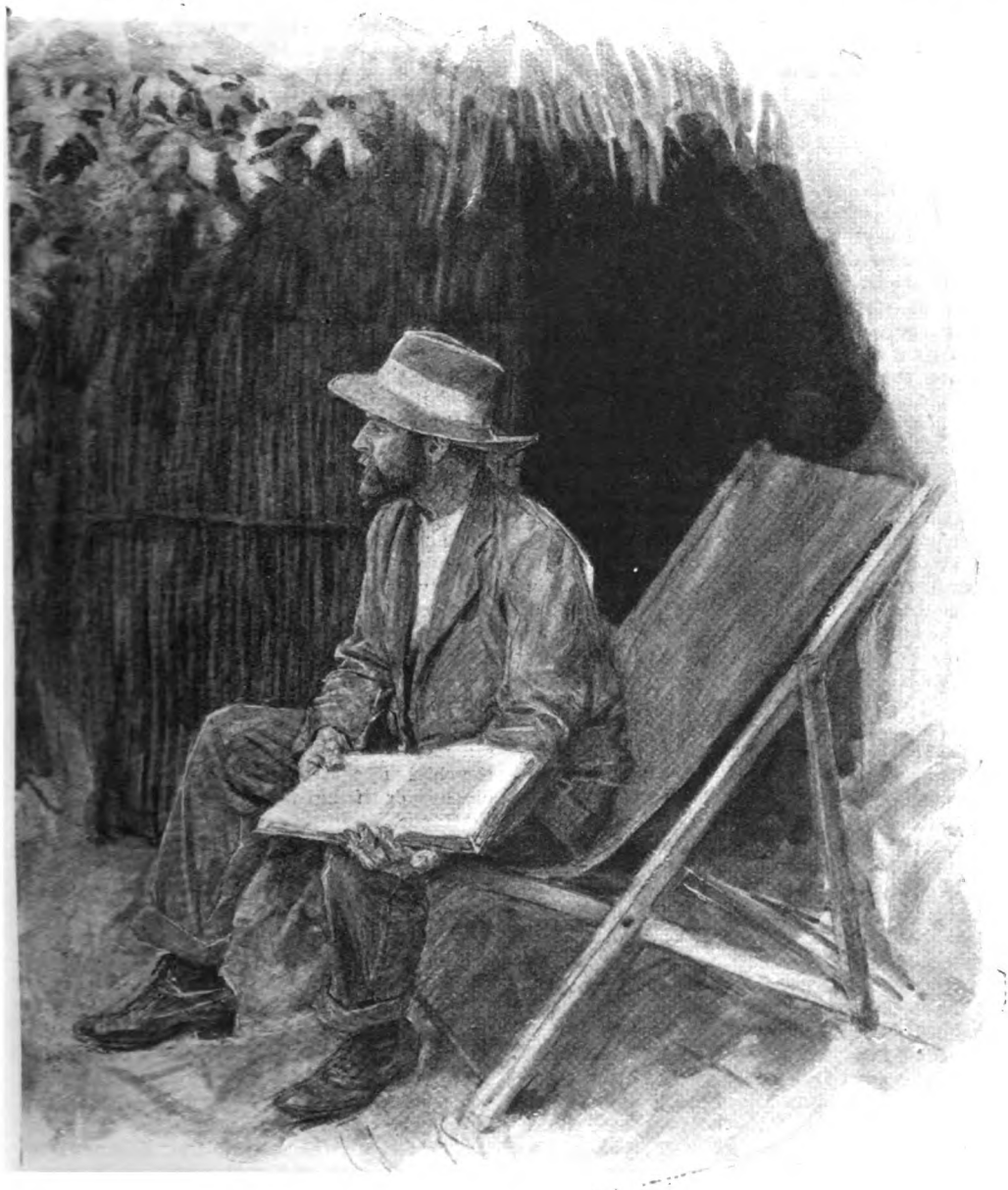
The tide was on the ebb, and he was going over to the reef to hunt in the rock-pools.

Since the revelation that had come to Lestrange six months and more had passed, making over twelve months since the *Raratonga* sailed, and with the passing of the months the child had grown.

He was now perhaps three and a half years of

age, yet he was big as a civilized child of five, the germ of a man full of vigour and daring, restless, a thing actuated entirely by the moment, except when now and then a broody fit would take him.

Kearney had made him a little kilt of grass



This was no illusion, the likeness to Emmeline was there. Then, as Lestrange gazed on this wonder, it passed away and Emmeline turned, as if touched by a magic wand, into Dick.

such as he had seen worn by the natives of Nauru, and Dick in his kilt sat now in the stern sheets watching every movement of the man as he cast off from the bank.

They had only one boat now, for a little while ago the old dinghy of the *Northumberland* had given up the ghost, opening her seams, which

they had no means of caulking, and filling with lagoon water.

It was nine o'clock in the morning, and when they reached the reef and tied up, the sea was half out and the pools showed, flashing like shields in the morning sun.

To-day, however, Kearney seemed to have little interest in the business of the reef. He was bothered. Lestrange had been going very much to pieces of late, physically more than mentally. His heart was troubling him. Sometimes he would be all right and sometimes he would have to sit down to rest after a little exertion. He had "gone baggy" under the eyes and wasn't himself at all. The fact that the schooner was getting long overdue did not help matters.

About eleven o'clock they turned back. Lestrange was nowhere to be seen, but he often went wandering in the woods, and Kearney, having put the spears aside, set to work preparing the midday meal.

When it was ready and the fish cooked to a turn, Lestrange had not yet come back. However, he was sometimes late and the child was hungry, so they set to, the sailor grumbling to himself like a housewife whose cooking has been slighted.

"Wonder where he can have got to?" said Kearney to himself. "Tomfoolin' about in them woods."

After the meal he sat down with his back to a tree and lit a pipe. The pipe finished, he lay on his back with his hands behind his head looking up at the leaves moving gently in the wind. Next moment he was asleep.

He slept several hours, and when he awoke Lestrange had not yet come back. He was nowhere to be seen, and Kearney, now seriously alarmed, after a glance into the house, stood looking about him, now towards the lagoon, now towards the woods. Then seeing Dick, who had roused from sleep and was playing about, he caught the child by the hand and made towards the trees.

IV.

IT was three weeks or so after the vanishing of Lestrange. Kearney, busy over something near the house, suddenly looking up, caught sight of Dick.

He had got into the dinghy, untied her, and pushed out with the boat-hook; that the tide was on the ebb didn't matter to Dick.

Hanging over the stern and pretending to fish, Kearney's voice had roused him and he stood, now, balancing himself and considering the situation created by his own act.

A little over three and a half years of age, he was as strong and big as a much older child, but he was neither big nor strong enough to man the sculls, and the dinghy was drifting towards the cape of wild coconuts beyond which lay the lagoon stretch reaching to the break and the sea. Then, attending to Kearney's directions, he got a scull over on the port side, got it into the cup of the rowlock, and, still standing up, tried to pull, making a terrible mess of the business.

"God's truth!" cried Kearney, "you've done it now—pull it in! That ain't no good, you're getting her farther out." He came running along the bank to the little cape, hoping the boat would drift close enough for him to catch it by the gunnel. He couldn't swim.

Dick had pulled the scull in and was standing, showing no sign of fear, as the dinghy, which had twisted sideways a bit owing to his efforts with the scull, altered its position and came along, bow on, nearing the cape now, but at least a yard too far away to be seized.

"Boat-huk!" cried Kearney; "stick out the boat-huk. Lord alive, look slippy!"

Before the words were spoken Dick had grasped the idea. He seized the boat-hook, raised it aloft with a mighty effort, and, as the dinghy closed with the cape, let the end drop into the hands of the sailor.

Kearney drew the boat to the bank. Then getting into the little craft, he took the sculls and rowed back.

He neither scolded nor shook the child as another might have done. Dick had acted so sensibly and so pluckily that the sailor had no heart to "be harsh with him," but the incident had a profound effect upon the mind of Kearney and the future of Dick.

The question "what would have happened to the little devil if he'd gone drifting off?" suggested another question to the mind of the sailor. The question what would happen to the child if he, Kearney, were drifted off in the dinghy, or if he went west suddenly, like Lestrange.

That evening, an hour or so before sunset, he took the child out in the boat.

"Now," said Kearney, "I'm goin' to teach you how to scull if you ever get adrift again."

He drew in the sculls and then put one over the stern, resting it in the notch in the transom, and began to instruct his pupil how to scull a boat with a single oar.

Dick watched attentively, and then the sailor, with one hand on the oar, let his pupil grasp it to show him how it was done. The whole business was hopeless, for the child had neither the height nor strength for the work, though he had the spirit. But Kearney was not the man to cast cold water on a pupil. "That's grand," said he. "Couldn't be doin' it better meself—that's the way we do it——"

"Lemme—lemme," cried Dick, trying to push the other aside and get the whole business in his own hands and nearly losing the scull when he did.

"Aye," said Kearney, recovering it, "I'll let you when you're a bit bigger. There now, let hold of it, and maybe I'll make you a little

one to-morrow you can get a proper grip of. Now get forward and play with the boat-huk—that's more your size."

The feature that was beginning to strike out individually in the child was his mouth. Dick was a nose-breather, and only opened his mouth to eat and sometimes to talk in two-or-three word sentences. You could chase him round the sward and his way of breathing would be just the same, and, like the Red Indians, when he laughed he rarely opened his lips. It was a beautiful mouth, firm, well-curved, and showing the dawn of decision upon it.

ONE day Kearney determined on an expedition over to the eastern side of the island in search of bananas. He could have gone in the dinghy or have taken his way along the lagoon bank, but at the last moment he decided to make a short cut through the woods, taking Dick along with him.

They started, taking their way through the trees on the side of the sward opposite to the house, Kearney leading. The trees were not dense, and the wind from the sea stirred their fronds and branches, bringing with it the murmur of the reef.

Then came some giant trees with trunks buttressed like the matamata; they stood in two rows, making an alley across which swung cables of liantasse, powdered here and there with the star-like blossoms of some lesser vine, and here and there orchids like vast butterflies and birds in arrested flight.

The trees like the pillars of a cathedral, the twilight and the incense-like odours of tropical flowers gave to this place a solemnity and character all its own. Lestrange, in his wood wanderings, had found it out, and had often come here to meditate and dream and sometimes forget, for here the great trees cast their presence as well as their shadow on a man's soul. Half way down this alley Kearney halted.

A breath of wind came stealing towards him, stirring the tendrils of the liantasse and bearing with it suddenly an appalling stench from the flower-decked gloom ahead.

He stood just as though a bar had been placed across his path; then, taking the child by the hand, he turned and retraced his path to the house.

V.

STANDING on the summit of Palm Tree Island and gazing sou'west one saw above the horizon line something that was not land. The sky just there altered in colour as though dimmed by a finger-print and sometimes, just before sunset, this mysterious spot in the sky took on a vague glow.

Any old South Sea man would have known at once that this spot was the mirror blaze from a great lagoon reflected in the sky. Kearney recognized the fact at once when he saw it. "There's a big low island somewheres down there," had been his verdict, and he was right.

Karolin was the name of this atoll island; even the whalemen called it by its native name instead of dubbing it with some outlandish term of their own, after their custom with islands not on the chart. But they never entered the lagoon. The place had a bad name, wood and water being scarce and the natives untrustable.

The lagoon was forty miles in circumference, and the containing reef nowhere higher than six feet; standing on the reef you could not see the opposite shore, except when mirage lifted it showing across the great pond brimming with light, a line dotted with palm clumps. There was no water source on Karolin, only ponds cut in the coral and filled by the rains; no taro, only puraka; no bread-fruit; coconuts, puraka, pandanas fruit, and fish were the main support of the inhabitants, and though Palm Tree, with all its vegetation, lay within reach, they never went there for food.

The fishing canoes, in the bad seasons when fish were poisonous at Karolin, would push out with the northward-running current, and sometimes even skirt the reef of the northern island, but they never landed, and for three reasons. The high island with its dense trees and narrow lagoon was an abomination to the minds of the atoll-bred people. In the remote past for some reason they had emigrated *en masse*, but had returned in less than three months broken in spirit and yearning for the great spaces and the sun blaze on the lagoon. Again, years ago there had been a tribal war, and the remnants of the defeated tribe had made north and had been pursued and killed on the beach of Palm Tree to a man* and their ghosts were supposed still to haunt the beach. Lastly, Palm Tree, though invisible from Karolin by direct vision, was sometimes at long intervals raised by the witchery of mirage, showing as a picture in the sky, and an island that could raise itself like this was a place to be avoided. Katafa had only seen this vision twice, though she was fourteen years of age.

Twelve years ago a ship had come into the lagoon of Karolin, a Spanish ship, the *Pablo Poirez*, Spanish owned and out of Valparaiso. Valores was the captain's name, and he had his wife and little daughter on board, a child two years old, named Chita.

He came in for water. There had been a drought, and the wells of Karolin were low, and Le Juan, the sorceress and rain expert, in a temper, and Uta Matu, the chief man of the northern tribe, spoiling for a fight.

In the middle of all this the Spaniards came on shore with their water-barrels and were met by Le Juan and Uta Matu, who barred the way to the wells, only to be pushed aside by Valores

* See "The Blue Lagoon."

and his men. In a moment the beach was in a turmoil, daggers and sharks' teeth spears were whipped from beneath mats and from clefts in the rock; attacked on all sides and with the fury of a typhoon, the Spaniards fell butchered like sheep, slaughtered to a man.

Then the canoes put out for the ship, Uta Matu boarding her to starboard and his son Laminai to port. There were six Spaniards on board. They had knocked the shackle off the anchor chain and were trying to handle the sails, forgetting that the tide was flooding and that the wind was coming from the break—working like maniacs and falling like cattle before the spear men. The wife of Valores fell defending her child. Stricken on the back with a coral-headed club, she fell with it in her arms, covering it so that they had to turn her over to tear it from her.

Now the ship, free of the anchor, had been drifting with the flood and wind, and just as Laminai was holding the child aloft before dashing it on the deck, the keel took a submerged reef that rose from the lagoon floor just there, the shock made him slip on the blood-soaked deck, and, as he fell, Uta caught the child.

His blood-lust was satiated and the gods had spoken, at least so it seemed to Uta Matu, and when Laminai got on his feet again and tried to seize his prey he received a clip on the side of the head from the old man's right fist, strong to save as to kill.

But the chief had reckoned without Le Juan. The sight of the rescued Chita filled the priestess of Nanawa with the most dismal forebodings. It was a girl child, belonging to the murdered papalagi, whose spirits through it would surely find revenge. Le Juan, despite her devotion to sorcery, or maybe because of it, was a very clever woman; she foresaw in the growing-up and mating of this alien with some young man of the tribe, danger to the people of Karolin. It might be that the ghosts of the murdered ones would work through her and the children she bore; Le Juan could not tell, she only knew that there was danger in the thing, and that night, squatting in Uta Matu's house whilst the rest of the tribe lay about on the beach drunk with carnage and kava, she so worked on the mind of the chief that he was about to assent to the strangling of Chita when, of a sudden, a noise filled the air, first a whisper, then a murmur, then a roar—the rain—the long-deferred rain, beating the lagoon to foam and washing the coral free of blood stains.

"How now about the ill luck?" asked Uta Matu. "The child is lucky, it has brought us rain. Take her and do what you will with her, put spells upon her or what you like, but if you injure one hair of her head I will have you choked with a wedge of raw puraka and I will cast thy body to the sharks, Le Juan."

"As you please," said the old woman. "I will do what I can."

She christened Chita, Katafa, or the Frigate Bird, a creature associated with wanderings and great distances, and then gradually and year by year she isolated Katafa from the tribe, absolutely and in all but speech.

Now, how can you isolate a person from their fellows so that whilst living, talking, eating, and moving amongst them they are as much apart as though ringed round with a barrier of steel? It seems impossible, but it was not impossible to Le Juan. She imposed upon Chita the rarest of all the forms of taboo—*Taminan*. There were men and women on Karolin tabooed from touching the skin of a shark, from eating certain forms of shell fish, and so forth and so on, but the terrible taboo of *Taminan* debarred its victims from touching any human creature *or being* touched.

From her earliest infancy the mind of the Spanish child had been worked upon by Le Juan until the taboo had taken a firm hold and become part and parcel of her brain processes and evasion an instantaneous reflex act. You might suddenly have put out your hand to grasp or touch Katafa—you would have touched nothing but air; like an expert fencer, she would have evaded you if only by the twentieth part of an inch. To understand the tremendous grasp of this thing upon the mind, it is enough to say that had she wished you to touch her, desired with all her heart that you should touch her, wish or desire would have been fruitless before the impassable barrier erected by the subliminal mind.

On no grown person could the taboo of *Taminan* be imposed—only on the plastic mind of childhood could it obtain its grip strong as hypnotism and lasting till death.

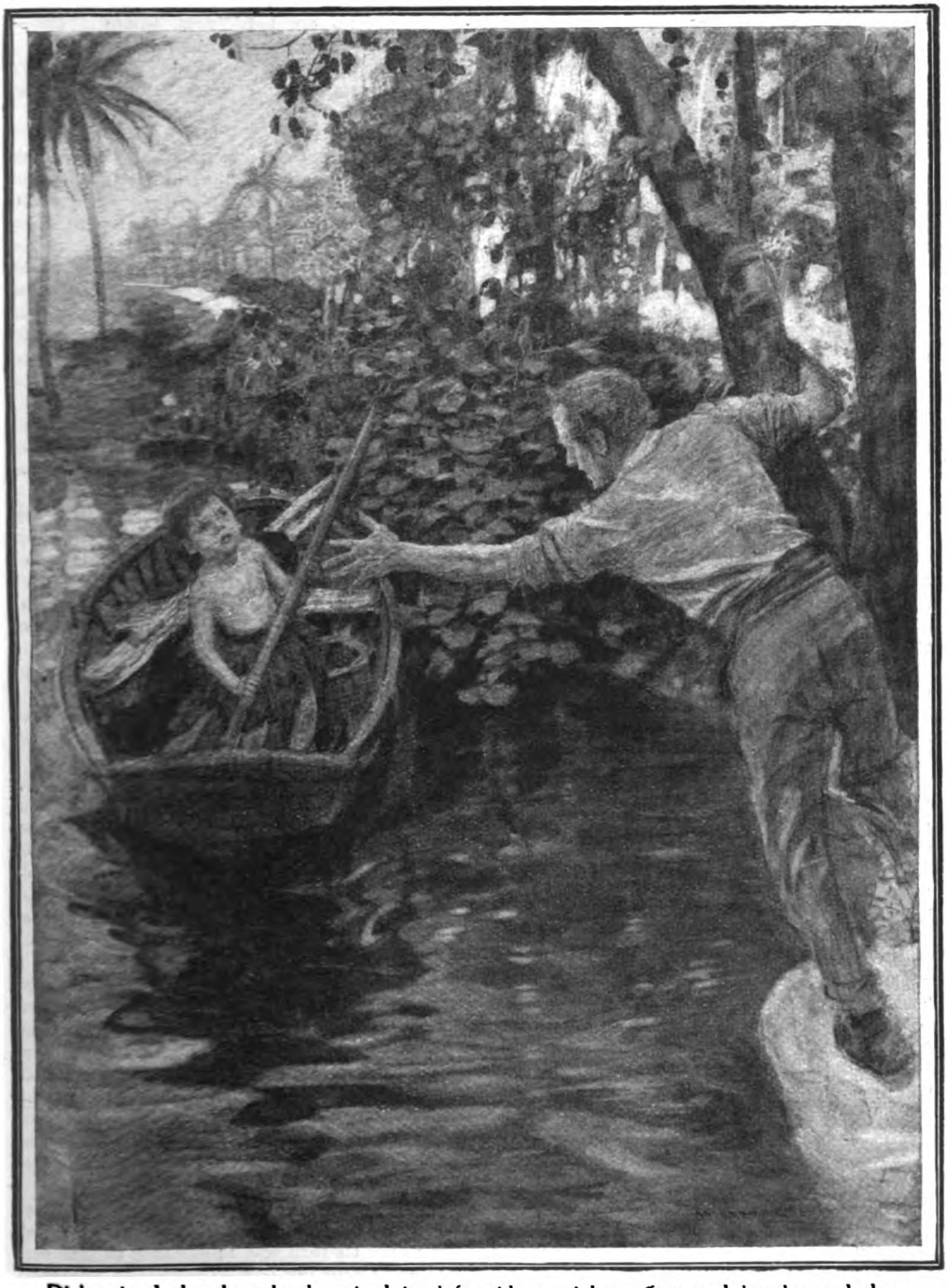
At six years of age Le Juan's work was accomplished and Katafa was immune, isolated for ever from her kind. The work had been helped by the fact that every creature on Karolin had avoided her, but on the day when Le Juan proclaimed her free she was taken into the tribe, men, women, and children no longer held apart, and she mixed with them, played with them, fished with them, talked with them, a ghost in everything but speech.

VI.

ONE evening some eight years later, just before sunset, Katafa was standing on the beach waiting for Taiofa, the son of Laminai. They were going out to fish for palu beyond the reef.

Straight as a dart, naked but for a girdle of dracæna leaves, she stood, her eyes sweeping the lagoon water where the gulls were fishing.

Near by some native girls were helping to unload a canoe that had come over from the southern beach, and as they talked and laughed



Dick seized the boat-hook, raised it aloft with a mighty effort, and let the end drop into the hands of the sailor.

over the work, flat-nosed and plain, muscular and full of the joy of life, they formed the strangest contrast to the Spanish girl in the dawn of her beauty. Slim, graceful as a young palm tree, Katafa stood separate from the others in spirit as in body.

One might have said of her that here was a living, breathing human being who yet was divorced from humanity; every movement of her body, her glance, her laughter, spoke of a spirit irresponsible, thoughtless, light as the spirit of a bird. She who touched nothing but the food she ate, the ground she trod on and the water she swam in, who had never grasped a living thing since the tragedy of the Spanish ship so long ago, had seemingly failed to find the hold upon life given to the least of the Kanaka girls amongst whom she had grown up, creatures almost animal yet human in affection and tied together by the common bonds of joy and hope and fear. One of the strangest effects of the terrible law under which Katafa lived was her insensibility to fear.

'O he, Katafa!"

It was Taiofa, sixteen years of age and strong as a grown man; he was carrying a big basket containing food and several young drinking coconuts, the lines and bait. The canoe that was to take them lay on the beach, the water washing its stem, and between them they put off, Taiofa running up the sail to catch the favouring westerly wind. Katafa steered with a paddle; the tide was running out and they cleared the break just as the setting sun touched the far-off invisible western reef.

Out here they met the swell, and with the wind blowing up against the night and the last of the sunset on the sail, they steered for the fishing bank and the twenty-fathom water that lay three miles to the north-east.

Neither Katafa nor her companion spoke, or only a word now and then; steering an outriggered canoe requires attention, for, if the outrigger dips too deep, there may be disaster. As for Taiofa, he was busy overhauling the tackle, the anchor, which was simply a chipped lump of coral, and the mooring rope.

The Spanish ship had been a blessing to Karolin; before burning and scuttling, the natives had looted her; the rope Taiofa was handling had been made from part of her running rigging unwoven and re-twisted, the fishing-hooks beaten out of some of her metal. Having placed everything in order he crouched, brooding, his eyes fixed on the last tinge of sunset, and then raised to the out-jetting stars.

And now, as though assured of their position by chart, compass, and sounding lead, the sail was brailed and the anchor dropped, the canoe riding to it bow to swell.

Whilst the boy fished, the girl watched, a heavy maul beside her for the stunning of the palu when caught. An hour passed, during which the fisherman hauled in a few small schnapper, whilst the girl, perched now on the pole of the outrigger, watched the seas go by flowing up out of the night ahead and passing in long rhythmical columns of swell, star-shot and rippling on the anchor rope.

"The palu are not," said Taiofa. "but—who knows?—they may come before dawn."

"Better then than not at all," said the girl; 'but it is not the palu; O he, Taiofa, we should have waited for a bigger moon."

HOURS passed and then at last came the reward, the line ran out and the boy, calling to the girl to steady the canoe, hauled whilst the great fish fought, now darting ahead till the bow overran the anchor rope, now zigzagging astern. Now they could see it fighting below the surface, and now thrashing the starlit water to foam; it was nearly alongside, and Taiofa was shouting to his companion to get ready to strike, when of a sudden the night went black, and the squall was on them.

They had not noticed it coming up from the south; the smash of the rain and the rush of the wind took them like the stroke of a hand.

Taiofa, dropping the line which ran out, flung his weight to the outrigger side, whilst the girl, instinctively and at once, dropped the maul and sprang aft to the steering paddle. Her thought was to keep the canoe head to sea, but the anchor rope had parted and the canoe, instead of broaching-to, was running in some mysterious manner before the squall stern on to the leaping swell.

It was the palu. The end of the line was tied to the bow, and the great fish, driving north with the current, was towing them.

Then with a last roaring cataract of rain the squall passed and the stars appeared, showing the tossing sea and Taiofa gone! He had been on the forward outrigger pole and the sea had taken him, leaving neither trace nor sound. The canoe had possibly overrun him, she did not know, nor did she care—Taiofa was less to her than an animal, and the devouring sea was feeling for her to devour her.

Something hit her like the stroke of a whip. It was the sheet of the mat sail that had broken loose. She seized it, fastened it, and then, as the sail filled before the wind, steered. The palu, feeling the slackening of the line, made a dash at right angles to their course; she saw the line tauten out to starboard, and countered with the paddle before the bow could be dragged round; then the line went slack, it had either broken or the fish had unhooked.

Then she steered, the big waves following her, and the wind, that had fallen to a breeze, filling the sail. To turn was impossible in that sea, and, even with the bow to the south, she could never have made Karolin against the wind with a single paddle and that clumsy sail.

In the hands of the God who sends the seeds of the thistle adrift on the wind, fearless, and grasping the paddle, she steered with only one object—to keep the little craft from broaching-to.

VII.

AT dawn the wind had sunk to a mild breeze, and the swell had lost its steepness. As the great blaze came in the east, and the brow of the sun shattered the horizon, Katafa reached for the basket of food tied to the after-pole of the outrigger and opened it. As she ate, her eyes roamed far and wide from sea-line to sea-line—nothing! Karolin had vanished far from sight and Palm Tree Island was too far off to show—nothing but the vales and hills of the marching swell, the following wind and the sun now breaking from the sea that seemed to cling to him. . . .

To beat back against the wind and the current was impossible to her, it was impossible even to turn the canoe with a single paddle, and in that swell—there was nothing to do but steer. . . . .

Far to the westward lay the Paumotus, with their reefs and races and utterly unaccountable currents; behind, Karolin and the vacant sea stretching to the Gambiers; to the east, the South American coast, a thousand miles and more away; to the north, Palm Tree, and the vacant sea stretching to the Marquesas—and all around silence. This new strange thing for which she had no name almost daunted her. She had lived with the eternal sound of the reef in her ears, it had been part of her world like the ground beneath her feet, and now that it was withdrawn she was at a loss; the occasional flap of the sail, the whisper and chuckle of the bow wash, the fizz of the foam as the outrigger broke the surface of the swell, all these sounds came to her strange against the silence. . . .

Standing up in the last blaze of the sunset, she strained her eyes—nothing. Once she thought that she could see a point breaking the far horizon, land or gull's wing, she could not be sure. Then with the dark the wind sank to a dead calm, and the swell to a gentle heave of the sea, and, crouching in the bottom of the canoe, Katafa, her head resting against the outrigger pole, closed her eyes.

She awoke at dawn with the whole eastern sky flushed like the petal of a vast rose on which the day star glittered like a point of dew. A faint breathing of wind from the north brought a whisper with it, the whisper of the reef, and for a second, just as she opened her eyes, the picture of Karolin came before her. Had she drifted back? Rising and grasping the mast she turned her face to the wind, and there, far away still, but breathing at her with the perfumed breath of the land wind, lay the form she had seen in mirage as a dreamer sees his fate.

VIII.

THAT morning, three hours after sun-up and half an hour after breakfast, Fate and Mr. Kearney had a difference of opinion.

The bananas were ripe on the eastern side of the island, and he had arranged in his mind to go and fetch a bunch, taking the quickest way, that is to say, right over the hill-top instead of round by the lagoon edge; but he was lazy and disposed to put the business off to a more convenient time. He would have made Dick row him round in the dinghy, only that Dick wanted the boat for purposes of his own beyond on the reef.

Eleven years of island life had altered Kearney almost as much as they had altered Dick. Always on the look-out for a ship during the first three years, he would not have left the island to-day unless shifted with a derrick. He had grown into the life, grown lazy and stouter and grizzled—and moral. A most extraordinary type of beachcomber. The child and the island, the sun and the easy way of life had all conspired in this work upon him. He had no hankerings now after bar-rooms; without tobacco for years, he had taken to chewing gum, finding plenty of it in the woods, and he had devised several innocent and non-laborious amusements for himself and the child, amongst others, shipbuilding. The very first act of Kearney when they had landed on the island had been the cutting of a little boat for Dick from a bit of wood. He could do anything with a knife; and one day, some six years ago, when time was hanging heavy, the saving idea came to him of constructing a model of the lost *Raratonga*. It took him nearly eight months to accomplish, but it was a beauty when finished, with sails of silk made from an old shirt of Lestrange's and a leaden keel constructed from the lead wrappings of a tea-chest which he managed to melt down.

They took it over and sailed it on the reef pool, and next day he set to work on another, a frigate this time. Four ships altogether had left the stocks of the Kearney-Dick combination, and meanwhile three real ships had touched the island, two whalers and a sandalwood schooner. The whalers Kearney had carefully avoided, the sandalwood schooner had come up in the arms of a hurricane, smashed herself to pieces on the reef, drowned every soul on board of her, and left the coral littered with trade goods, bolts of cloth enough to clothe a village, boxes of beads, cheap looking-glasses, dud Barlow knives—everything but tobacco.

HAVING contemplated the lagoon, the reef, and the moving figure of Dick for a while, Kearney suddenly shifted his position, rose, stretched himself, and, fetching a case knife from the shelf in the house, turned towards the trees. Passing through the woods he struck uphill till he reached the summit, where he paused for a moment to rest, a figure not unlike that of Robinson Crusoe, standing with his hand on the great summit rock and gazing far and wide across the ocean.

Then he shaded his eyes. Far off on the dead calm sea a canoe was drifting, two miles away it might have been to the south, and perhaps half a mile to the east. The land wind had died off completely and the tiny sail hung without a stir. He could not tell at that distance whether it had any occupants. Brown, like a withered leaf on the water, it lay drifting with the current that would take it past the island just as it had taken the dinghy with the lost children of Lestrange.

Kearney gazed for a full minute, then, turning, he came running downhill and back through the trees to the lagoon edge. Dick was still in view. Kearney hailed him, waving his arms, and the boy, understanding that he was wanted, left the business he was on, ran to the dinghy and, untying her, pushed across.

Dick was worth looking at as he came alongside, standing up in the dinghy, the boat-hook in his hands. Nearly fourteen, yet tall and big as a boy of fifteen or more, naked but for a kilt of leaves, with the forthright gaze of an eagle and a face where decision met daring, a philosopher, looking at him, might have said: "Here is the making of the world's finest man; here is the perfect human being, neither savage nor civilized, swift as a panther, graceful as a tree, yet endowed with mind, decision, and character."

Kearney saw only the red-headed boy whom he had watched growing up, and who had been a handful in his way ever since he had been big enough to row the dinghy.

"There's a boat beyond the reef," cried Kearney, stepping into the dinghy. "Now get aft with you and give me the sculls. I'm go'n' to try'n' fetch it in."

"A boat where y' say?" asked the boy.

"Out beyond the reef," replied the other, pushing off; "ship the tiller an' keep us close to the bank. I've not time for talkin'."

Dick shipped the tiller and steered whilst the other put all his strength into his stroke. They passed the little cape, nearly brushing the trees, and then down the long arm of the lagoon stretching to the east. It was slack tide, just before the flood, and the water was calm at the break; they shot through, taking the heave of the glassy swell, and there, drifted now a quarter of a mile to the north, was the canoe the sail still hanging without a stir.

"There's someun in her!" cried Dick.

KEARNEY took a glance over his shoulder and saw the figure of a girl. She was standing, holding on to the mast and looking towards them, a form graceful as the new moon, naked but for her girdle of dracæna leaves and with her free hand sheltering her eyes against the sun.

As they drew closer her voice came across the water clear as a bell and hailing them in some unknown language.

"It's a girl!" cried Kearney.

"What's a girl?" asked Dick, so filled with excitement over this new find that he was forgetting to steer.

"It's a female—mind your steerin'—you're a mile to starboard—there, let it be and I'll manage meself."

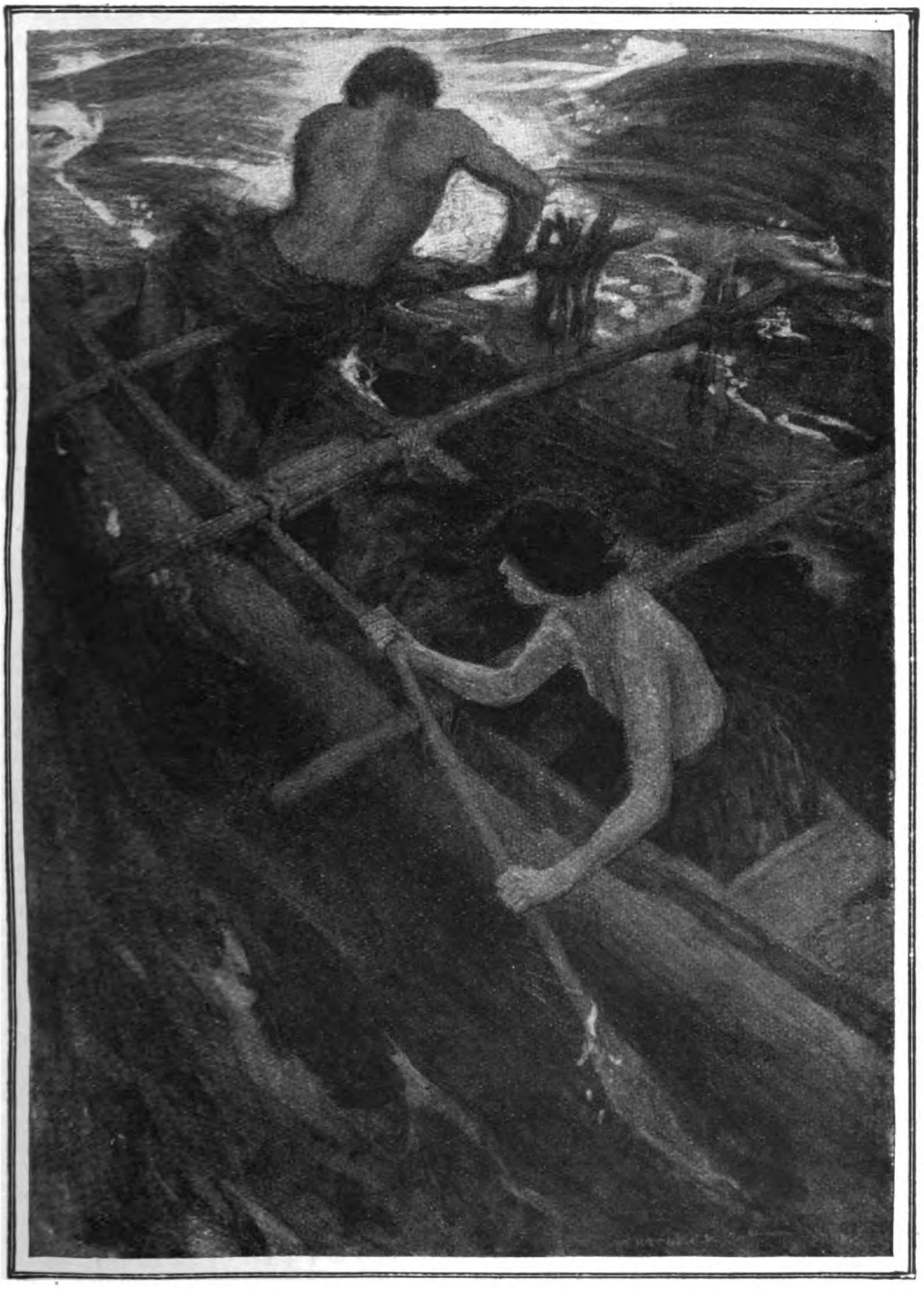
The girl, as they drew close, ran forward and seized the anchor rope; it had parted a good way from its fastening and there was some four fathoms of it left. She stood with it coiled in her hand, and as the dinghy approached she sent the coil flying towards them, straight and sure. Then, as Kearney caught it, she darted aft and seized the steering paddle, crying out in answer to the sailor's questions in the same strange bell-like voice, but in a tongue dark to her saviours as Hebrew.

"Kanaka," said Kearney, "but she knows her business. Dick, leave that boat-huk down, we aren't boardin' her, we'll tow her in. Catch hold of the rope."

He got the sculls in, fastened the rope end to the after thwart, and then started to work towing the canoe's head round.

THOUGH Dick had asked Kearney what a girl was, it was the word he was inquiring about, not the thing. The stupid old story of the boy who saw girls for the first time at a fair, was told that they were ducks, and then expressed his desire for a duck, has no foundation in psychology. Life is cleverer than that. Dick saw in Katafa a young creature something like himself; descended from a thousand generations of people who knew all about girls, his subconscious mind accepted Katafa's structural differences without question; she was far less strange to him than the canoe. His ancestors had never seen a South Sea canoe. This strange, savage, mosquito-like structure, with its bindings of coconut sennit and its mat sail, fascinated the boy far more than its occupant; to him, truly, it was like nothing earthly: the outrigger alone was a mystery, and the whole thing a joy, a joy delightfully tinged with uneasiness, for the absolutely new is disturbing to the soul of man or beast.

As he rowed Kearney noticed that the girl was chewing something in the way of food, and once he saw her bend and take up a drinking coconut and put it to her mouth. A fact that eased his mind, bothered by the idea that she might be starving. The tide was beginning to flood. It swept them through the break, and as the dinghy turned up the right arm of the lagoon, the tow rope now tautening, now smacking the water, it was the girl's turn to be astonished. The tall trees seen from outside the reef had seemed monstrous to her eyes, accustomed only to the flat circle of the atoll, but here, inside the reef, the density of the foliage, the unknown plants, the unknown smells, the trees sweeping up to heaven, almost terrified her, brave though she was. The only



The canoe was running in some mysterious manner before the squall. It was the palu. The end of the line was tied to the bow and the great fish was towing them.

familiar and comforting thing was the reef and its voice—but those trees in their hundreds and thousands, climbing on each other's shoulders!

Steering with her paddle she kept the canoe in line with the dinghy, the wild coconut almost brushing her as they turned the little cape; then, as they came alongside the bank, she sprang out and stood, her arms crossed and a hand on each shoulder, watching, whilst the others landed and Kearney tied the boats up.

"Now, then, Kanaka girl," said Kearney, as he rose from this business and approached her, followed cautiously by the boy. "What's yer name? Jim," pointing to his breast with his thumb. "I'm Jim—Jim. What's yourn, eh?"

She understood at once.

"Katafa," came the reply, then swift as a rippling stream, "Te tataga Karolin po uli agotoimoana—Katafa."

"Ain't no use," replied Kearney. "Tie a clove hitch in it and we'll call you Jinny. Want some food? God bless my soul, where's the use in talkin' to her. Here, you, Dick, come along an' get the fire agoin'. Come along, Kanaka girl." He clapped her on the shoulder—made to do so, but his hand touched nothing but empty air.

"Well, I'm damned," said Kearney. He had got the shock of his life. It was not the fact that she had evaded him, but the manner of the evasion. His hand had missed the shoulder, driven it away, seemingly, as wind moves a curtain, yet she had scarcely moved and her face and attitude had not altered in the least. She seemed quite unconscious of what had happened, and the man who has ever tried to touch a Taminanite will know exactly the feeling of Kearney as he turned to make the fire, followed by Dick.

KATAFA drew closer, then, at a certain distance, she squatted down and watched them at work. She had no fear of men or ghosts. Human beings and ghosts were things equally remote to Katafa, who could touch or be touched by neither.

Infected by Le Juan and filled with wild fancies or maybe endowed with psychic powers, she had seen the "men who leave no footprints" walking in the sun blaze of Karolin. There was a sandy cove eight or nine miles from the break, and here with Taiofa she had watched them walking like people astray and bewildered.

She had flung stones through them, Taiofa wondering and seeing nothing. At night, had you possessed the eyes of the Spanish girl, you would have seen in the dark of the moon, and at a certain hour, a man swimming in the starlight from the old anchorage of the *Pablo Poiriz* towards the break, leaving a trail in the starlight, always at the same hour and always in the same direction; and sometimes on these nights fires would spring up on the reef where it trended to the west, lit by no man's hand, for no man was there.

But Palm Tree to her eyes seemed free of anything like this, though full of strange things enough. Amongst the gifts presented by the wreck were three or four tin cases of Swedish matches, enough to last for years. Kearney had discarded the tinder-box and he was lighting the fire with a box of matches a fact more interesting than bonnets to Katafa as she squatted watching his every movement.

Then when the food was ready and Dick had fetched some water from the little spring at the back of the yam patch, Kearney called to the "Kanaka girl" to pull in her chair.

She came within a couple of yards, but would come no farther, squatting on her heels in an attitude that gave her freedom to spring away at a moment's notice. Kearney stretched over with some food on a plate for her, then he handed a coconut bowl with some water in it. Then he began on his own meal. He seemed put out.

"She ain't right," said Mr. Kearney, as though communing with himself.

"What ain't right, Jim?" asked the boy, a fish in his fingers. "Why ain't she right, Jim? Wha's the matter she can't talk?"

The only things he had ever heard Kearney address as "she" were the ships they made. Katafa had in some way taken in his mind a tinge from those delightful ships. She was a "she." The canoe helped—it was hers. Now that the canoe was half out of sight, hidden by the bank, and Katafa sitting there close to him, she fascinated him. His passionate love of the sea, of the dinghy, of the little ships, of everything connected with the water, all lent colour to this strange new being who had come up out of the sea in that thing. It was almost as if she had a keel on her. He would have loved to make friends, but he was too shy as yet, and she couldn't talk so that he could understand.

He set his teeth in the fish.

"Lord, I dunno," said Kearney, his recent experience hot in his mind, yet unable to explain it in speech. "She ain't like other folk. There, don't be askin' questions, but get on with your dinner. Maybe it's just she's a Kanaka."

"What's a Kanaka, Jim?"

"You get on with your dinner and don't be askin' questions."

The sociable meal proceeded, Katafa "tuckin' into the food" with a good appetite, but with an eye ever on Kearney. Kearney, by his attempts to clap her on the shoulder, had laid the foundation of a lot of trouble for himself. He had raised against him the something that Le Juan had bred in the subconscious mind of the girl.

No man, woman, or child on Karolin had ever tried to touch her; she was taboo to them

as they to her; the art of avoidance, which was as natural and unconscious to her as the art of walking, had always been exercised against an accidental touch. Kearney had done what no one else had ever done, tried to touch her.

But if you think that she reasoned this out in her mind, you would be far from the truth. Whatever Le Juan's means of tuition may have been—a hot iron was one of them—they had left all but no mark on the conscious mind of the grown girl; otherwise her life would have been as impossible as the life of a person who has to think over each step he takes, each movement of the body, and each respiration he makes. Le Juan had made the taboo not a direction to be obeyed, but a law of being, living like a watch-dog in the dark chambers of the girl's mind - a watch-dog baring its teeth at Kearney.

Katafa had evaded the friendly blow of Kearney just as on Karolin she had often evaded the touch of hands in the pulling in of a fishing net, instantaneously and all but unconsciously, but the difference was vast. Kearney had placed himself among a new order of beings by his act. His clothes helped. She had never seen anyone in trousers and shirt before. Decidedly this strange bearded man required watching.

Dick was different; for all his red head and straight nose and strange-coloured eyes, he might have been a boy of Karolin.

SHE finished her food. Kearney had given her a plate, one of the few unbroken of those Stanistreet had left behind for them. It had flowers painted on it, and the thing intrigued her vastly. It seemed to her a new sort of shell, and when the sailor rose, replete and drowsy, and went off for his siesta in a comfortable spot amidst the trees, Dick, who had received instructions to "clear up them things an' give's a call if she tries to meddle with the boat," saw Katafa furtively trying to scratch one of the flowers off the plate.

"They're painted on," said Dick, suddenly losing his shyness. "You can't get them things off." Finding his voice gave him courage, and getting on his legs, he ran off to the house, returning in a minute with one of the ships, a frigate. Kearney had made rests for each one to stand on, and he carried the frigate, rest and all, and placed it close by her on the ground.

"Ain't like yours," said Dick, reclining beside it and handling the tiny spars so that she might see how they swung. "It's a fridgit."

The girl, appealed to in the language of ships and sitting on her heels, regarded the little vessel with interest. In Karolin lagoon, two miles beyond the break and in ten fathom water, lay the hull of a sunk ship that the Kanakas had burnt. She had knocked a hole in herself by drifting on a reef, and the flames had only time to bring the masts down before she sank, and there she lay on an even keel, clear to be seen in the crystal water, and with the fish playing round her stern post.

The Karolin boys called her the big canoe of the papalagi. Katafa knew nothing of her history, or of its connection with herself, but the shape was the same as the shape of the "fridgit," only the masts were wanting.

"Look!" said Dick, showing how the yards were swung. "She's square-sailed, albut the mizzen, same's your boat. You could reef 'em up only there ain't any reef points; she's too small, Jim says. This is the rudder an' tiller. You ain't got no rudder to yours." He looked up at her; from her face and the interest in it, she seemed to understand. She leaned forward and moved the tiny tiller with her fingertip; a wheel was beyond Kearney's art, and the steering gear of Sir Cloudesley Shovel's ships had to suffice. Then she leaned farther forward and blew hard at the tiny main-topsail, slinging the yard round.

"Matagi," cried she, "O he amorai—Matagi."

"That's the way it goes," cried Dick, pleased to find her so apt and talking just as though she were able to understand every word, "and when you're sailin' close to the wind you haul it that way. That square rig—wait a minit."

He rushed off to the house and returned with the schooner, dumping it before her.

"That's fore'n'aft."

Katafa looked at the model of the *Rarotonga* with her head slightly on one side; she seemed admiring it. Dick, watching her, felt pleased. Many a grown-up English person, able to talk, would have failed in this business, or blundered in their appreciation of these important things, but Katafa was one of the craft, seemed so, anyway, and Dick, old friends with her now, and free and easy as though she were Kearney, proceeded to demonstrate the action of the throat and peak halyards in raising the gaff, the topping lifts in supporting the boom, and how the head canvas was set. Then, suddenly remembering duty, he ran back to the house with the ships, and set to work to clear away the remains of the food and the three plates. He did not wash the plates, he was too anxious to get busy again with Katafa.

She had become all of a sudden the first great event of his life; she could neither speak in ordinary language to him, nor he to her—but she was youth. Though he had lived eleven years with Kearney, and though Kearney had practically taught him to talk, the sailor had never got as close to him as this creature of his own age who had suddenly appeared as if at the lift of a curtain.

The instant Kearney had withdrawn, the spell had begun to work; it might have been weeks before Dick would have shown these treasured ships to a grown person.

As he bustled about, filled with a new energy and interest, Katafa, who had risen to her feet, watched him. Light-minded and irresponsible

as the boy, there still lay between her and him an abyss that even youth could not cross—the abyss that had lain between her and the children of Karolin, with whom, yet, she had played, but as a person might play with shadows. All the same, youth could gaze across the abyss, over which, despite everything, the little ships had sailed. These things had fascinated her. She could see more of them in the house, attractive as toys, yet mysterious as fetishes—maybe having something to do with the gods of Dick and Kearney.

Dick knew nothing of this. Duty done with, he made another dash for the house, producing no ship this time, but a stick three feet long and a ball made of tia wood.

Kearney had invented a game for him, a sort of cross between baseball and cricket. The trunk of an artu on the grove edge did for wicket, and the run was from this to a bread-fruit trunk and back. Kearney, since he had grown lazy, had held off from this game, saying it was "too much of a bother."

"Catch!" cried Dick, throwing the ball to Katafa. She caught it; he held out his hands, and she flung it back hard and swift and sure. She could throw a stone near a hundred yards, and throw it like a man.

He showed her the stick, and tossing the ball back to her, ran to the tree, pointed to it, and then stood with the stick ready to defend it.

She understood at once.

When Kearney came forth from his afternoon rest he found Dick tired out, sitting by the house, and the girl by the lagoon bank, dabbling her feet in the water. It looked almost as though they had quarrelled, but they had not in the least. One of Dick's moody fits had come on him, as they often did after excitement or strenuous exertion. He was a different creature from the Dick of only a moment ago, and when these fits took him it was always the same: he seemed caught away to another world, and liked to sit by himself.

If ever a mother "came out" in a child, the lost Emmeline came out in Dick during these moods. It was almost as though he had changed sex.

"What have you been doin' with the stick?" asked Kearney.

"Playin'," said Dick, waking from his reverie.

(Another long instalment of this fascinating romance next month.)

ACROSTICS.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 114.

(The Second of the Series.)

Two "poisons": to consume them few are loth,
Although the duty is severe on both.

1. You plough, but plough in vain, the barren sand.
   Little will grow in this deserted land.
2. To beauty's neck fresh beauty it can bring,
   Or gleam translucent on her favourite ring.
3. Small alteration in your atlas make,
   This sea becomes a European lake.
4. Xeres, to thee I hold my glass on high!
   'Tis full of thy best product, old and dry.
5. The town gives name to fruit: in Christmas fare,
   Mince-pies and flaming puddings, 'tis not rare.
6. Arithmetic, a town of Boer fame,
   Religious controversy, share the name.
7. If with a duck's egg you achieve disgrace,
   You feel it is at least the proper place.

KING COLE.

Answers to Acrostic No. 114 should be addressed to the Acrostic Editor, THE STRAND MAGAZINE, *Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C.2, and must arrive not later than by the first post on January 10th.*

To every light one alternate answer may be sent; it should be written at the side. At the foot of his answer every solver should write his pseudonym and nothing else.

ANSWER TO DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 113.

CHRISTMAS comes but once a year,
When it comes it brings good cheer;
Help yourself—to what is here.

1. Less than twenty-one is he.
2. Here must Pope bisected be.
3. Mighty waterfall we see.
4. Four of them will make a pound.
5. Highest mountain here is found.
6. Moral truth should here abound.
7. Trisyllabic word, repeat.
8. Furthest. Two of them will meet.
9. Fabric, nonsense, overeat.

PAX.

1.	M	ino	R
2.	I	nn	O
3.	N	iagar	A
4.	C	rown	S
5.	E	veres	T
6.	P	rover	B
7.	I	terat	E
8.	E	xtrem	E
9.	S	tuf	F

NOTE.—Light 2. Innocent.

Solvers who write to the Acrostic Editor and desire answers to their queries should, with their letters, enclose a stamped addressed envelope, and he will endeavour to reply.

THE AWAKENING OF ROLLO PODMARSH

by

P.G.WODEHOUSE

ILLUSTRATED BY J.H.THORPE

DOWN on the new bowling-green behind the club-house some sort of competition was in progress. The seats about the smooth strip of turf were crowded, and the weak-minded yapping of the patients made itself plainly audible to the Oldest Member as he sat in his favourite chair in the smoking-room. He shifted restlessly, and a frown marred the placidity of his venerable brow. To the Oldest Member a golf-club was a golf-club, and he resented the introduction of any alien element. He had opposed the institution of tennis-courts; and the suggestion of a bowling-green had stirred him to his depths.

A young man in spectacles came into the smoking-room. His high forehead was aglow, and he lapped up a ginger-ale with the air of one who considers that he had earned it.

"Capital exercise!" he said, beaming upon the Oldest Member.

The Oldest Member laid down his "Vardon On Casual Water," and peered suspiciously at his companion.

"What did you go round in?" he asked.

"Oh, I wasn't playing golf," said the young man. "Bowls."

"A nauseous pursuit!" said the Oldest Member, coldly, and resumed his reading.

The young man seemed nettled.

"I don't know why you should say that," he retorted. "It's a splendid game."

"I rank it," said the Oldest Member, "with the juvenile pastime of marbles."

The young man pondered for some moments.

"Well, anyway," he said at length, "it was good enough for Drake."

"As I have not the pleasure of the acquaintance of your friend Drake, I am unable to estimate the value of his endorsement."

"*The* Drake. The Spanish Armada Drake. He was playing bowls on Plymouth Hoe when they told him that the Armada was in sight. 'There is time to finish the game,' he replied. That's what Drake thought of bowls."

"If he had been a golfer, he would have ignored the Armada altogether."

"It's easy enough to say that," said the young man, with spirit, "but can the history of golf show a parallel case?"

"A million, I should imagine."

"But you've forgotten them, eh?" said the young man, satirically.

"On the contrary," said the Oldest Member. "As a typical instance, neither more nor less remarkable than a hundred others, I will select the story of Rollo Podmarsh." He settled himself comfortably in his chair, and placed the tips of his fingers together. "This Rollo Podmarsh——"

"No, I say!" protested the young man, looking at his watch.

"This Rollo Podmarsh——"

"Yes, but——"

This Rollo Podmarsh (said the Oldest

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Member) was the only son of his mother, and she was a widow; and like other young men in that position he had rather allowed a mother's tender care to take the edge off what you might call his rugged manliness. Not to put too fine a point on it, he had permitted his parent to coddle him ever since he had been in the nursery; and now, in his twenty-eighth year, he invariably wore flannel next his skin, changed his shoes the moment they got wet, and—from September to May, inclusive—never went to bed without partaking of a bowl of hot arrowroot. Not, you would say, the stuff of which heroes are made. But you would be wrong. Rollo Podmarsh was a golfer, and consequently pure gold at heart; and in his hour of crisis all the good in him came to the surface.

In giving you this character-sketch of Rollo, I have been at pains to make it crisp, for I observe that you are wriggling in a restless manner and you persist in pulling out that watch of yours and gazing at it. Let me tell you that, if a mere skeleton outline of the man has this effect upon you, I am glad for your sake that you never met his mother. Mrs. Podmarsh could talk with enjoyment for hours on end about her son's character and habits. And, on the September evening on which I introduce her to you, though she had, as a fact, been speaking only for some ten minutes, it had seemed like hours to the girl Mary Kent, who was the party of the second part to the conversation.

Mary Kent was the daughter of an old school-friend of Mrs. Podmarsh, and she had come to spend the autumn and winter with her while her parents were abroad. The scheme had never looked particularly good to Mary, and after ten minutes of her hostess on the subject of Rollo she was beginning to weave dreams of knotted sheets and a swift getaway through the bedroom window in the dark of the night.

"He is a strict teetotaller," said Mrs. Podmarsh.

"Really?"

"And has never smoked in his life."

"Fancy that!"

"But here is the dear boy now," said Mrs. Podmarsh, fondly.

DOWN the road towards them was coming a tall, well-knit figure in a Norfolk coat and grey flannel trousers. Over his broad shoulders was suspended a bag of golf-clubs.

"Is *that* Mr. Podmarsh?" exclaimed Mary.

She was surprised. After all she had been listening to about the arrowroot and the flannel next the skin and the rest of it, she had pictured the son of the house as a far weedier specimen. She had been expecting to meet a small, slender young man with an eyebrow moustache and pince-nez; and this person approaching might have stepped straight out of Jack Dempsey's training-camp.

"Does he play golf?" asked Mary, herself an enthusiast.

"Oh, yes," said Mrs. Podmarsh. "He makes a point of going out on the links once a day. He says the fresh air gives him such an appetite."

Mary, who had taken a violent dislike to Rollo on the evidence of his mother's description of his habits, had softened towards him on discovering that he was a golfer. She now reverted to her previous opinion. A man who could play the noble game from such ignoble motives was beyond the pale.

"Rollo is exceedingly good at golf," proceeded Mrs. Podmarsh. "He scores more than a hundred and twenty every time, while Mr. Jenkinson, who is supposed to be one of the best players in the club, seldom manages to reach eighty. But Rollo is very modest—modesty is one of his best qualities—and you would never guess he was so skilful unless you were told.

"Well, Rollo darling, did you have a nice game? You didn't get your feet wet, I hope? This is Mary Kent, dear."

Rollo Podmarsh shook hands with Mary. And at her touch the strange dizzy feeling which had come over him at the sight of her suddenly became increased a thousand-fold. As I see that you are consulting your watch once more, I will not describe his emotions as exhaustively as I might. I will merely say that he had never felt anything resembling this sensation of dazed ecstasy since the occasion when a twenty-foot putt of his, which had been going well off the line, as his putts generally did, had hit a worm-cast sou'-sou'-east of the hole and popped in, giving him a snappy six. Rollo Podmarsh, as you will have divined, was in love at first sight. Which makes it all the sadder to think Mary at the moment was regarding him as an outcast and a blister.

Mrs. Podmarsh, having enfolded her son in a vehement embrace, drew back with a startled exclamation, sniffing.

"Rollo!" she cried. "You smell of tobacco-smoke."

Rollo looked embarrassed.

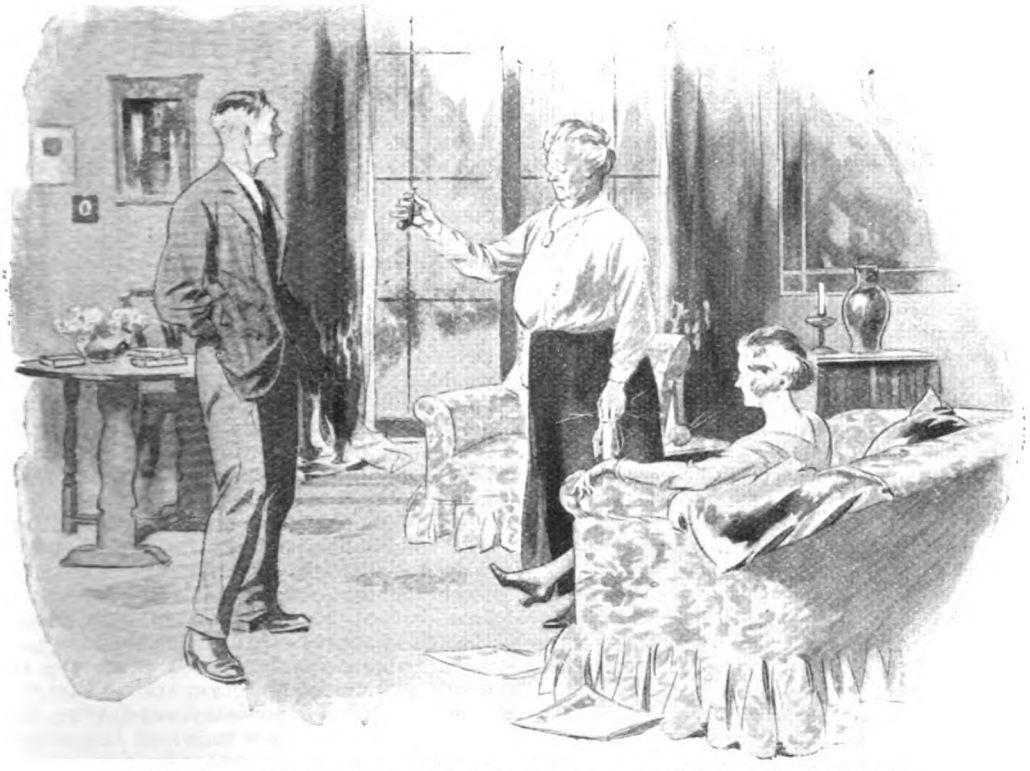
"Well, the fact is, mother——"

A hard protuberance in his coat-pocket attracted Mrs. Podmarsh's notice. She swooped and drew out a big-bowled pipe.

"Rollo!" she exclaimed, aghast.

"Well, the fact is, mother——"

"Don't you know," cried Mrs. Podmarsh,



"Don't you know that smoking is poisonous, and injurious to health?"
"Yes. But the fact is, mother——"

"that smoking is poisonous, and injurious to health?"

"Yes. But the fact is, mother——"

"It causes nervous dyspepsia, sleeplessness, gnawing of the stomach, headache, weak eyes, red spots on the skin, throat irritation, asthma, bronchitis, heart failure, lung trouble, catarrh, melancholy, neurasthenia, loss of memory, impaired will-power, rheumatism, lumbago, sciatica, neuritis, heartburn, torpid liver, loss of appetite, enervation, lassitude, lack of ambition, and falling out of hair."

"Yes, I know, mother. But the fact is, Ted Ray smokes all the time he's playing, and I thought it might improve my game."

And it was at these splendid words that Mary Kent felt for the first time that something might be made of Rollo Podmarsh. That she experienced one-millionth of the fervour which was gnawing at his vitals I will not say. A woman does not fall in love in a flash like a man. But at least she no longer regarded him with loathing. On the contrary, she found herself liking him. There was, she considered, the right stuff in Rollo. And if, as seemed probable from his mother's conversation, it would take a bit of digging to bring it up, well—she liked rescue-work and had plenty of time.

Mr. Arnold Bennett, in a recent essay, advises young bachelors to proceed with a certain caution in matters of the heart. They should, he asserts, first decide whether or not they are ready for love; then, whether it is better to marry earlier or later; thirdly, whether their ambitions are such that a wife will prove a hindrance to their career. These romantic preliminaries concluded, they may grab a girl and go to it. Rollo Podmarsh would have made a tough audience for these precepts. Since the days of Antony and Cleopatra probably no one had ever got more swiftly off the mark. One may say that he was in love before he had come within two yards of the girl. And each day that passed found him more nearly up to his eyebrows in the tender emotion.

He thought of Mary when he was changing his wet shoes; he dreamed of her while putting flannel next his skin; he yearned for her over the evening arrowroot. Why, the man was such a slave to his devotion

that he actually went to the length of purloining small articles belonging to her. Two days after Mary's arrival Rollo Podmarsh was driving off the first tee with one of her handkerchiefs, a powder-puff, and a dozen hairpins secreted in his left breast-pocket. When dressing for dinner he used to take them out and look at them, and at night he slept with them under his pillow. Heavens, how he loved that girl!

One evening, when they had gone out into the garden together to look at the new moon—Rollo, by his mother's advice, wearing a woollen scarf to protect his throat—he endeavoured to bring the conversation round to the important subject. Mary's last remark had been about earwigs. Considered as a cue, it lacked a subtle something; but Rollo was not the man to be discouraged by that.

"Talking of earwigs, Miss Kent," he said, in a low, musical voice, "have you ever been in love?"

Mary was silent for a moment before replying.

"Yes, once. When I was eleven. With a conjurer who came to perform at my birthday-party. He took a rabbit and two eggs out of my hair, and life seemed one grand sweet song."

"Never since then?"

"Never."

"Suppose—just for the sake of argument—suppose you ever did love anyone—er—what sort of man would it be?"

"A hero," said Mary, promptly.

"A hero?" said Rollo, somewhat taken aback. "What sort of hero?"

"Any sort. I could only love a really brave man—a man who had done some wonderful heroic action."

"Shall we go in?" said Rollo, hoarsely. "The air is a little chilly."

We have now, therefore, arrived at a period in Rollo Podmarsh's career which might have inspired those lines of Henley's about "the night that covers me, black as the pit from pole to pole." What with one thing and another, he was in an almost Job-like condition of despondency. I say "one thing and another," for it was not only hopeless love that weighed him down. In addition to being hopelessly in love, he was greatly depressed about his golf.

ON Rollo in his capacity of golfer I have so far not dwelt. You have probably allowed yourself, in spite of the significant episode of the pipe, to dismiss him as one of those placid, contented—shall I say dilettante?—golfers who are so frequent in these degenerate days. Such was not the case. Outwardly placid, Rollo was consumed inwardly by an ever-burning fever of ambition. His aims were not extravagant. He did not want to become amateur champion, nor even to win a monthly medal; but he did, with his whole soul, desire one of these days to go round the course in under a hundred. This feat accomplished, it was his intention to set the seal on his golfing career by playing a real money-match; and already he had selected his opponent, a certain Colonel Bodger, a tottery performer of advanced years who for the last decade had been a martyr to lumbago.

But it began to look as if even the modest goal he had marked out for himself were beyond his powers. Day after day he would step on to the first tee, glowing with zeal and hope, only to crawl home in the quiet evenfall with another hundred and twenty on his card. Little wonder, then, that he began to lose his appetite and would moan feebly at the sight of a poached egg.

With Mrs. Podmarsh sedulously watching over her son's health, you might have supposed that this inability on his part to teach the foodstuffs to take a joke would have caused consternation in the home. But it so happened that Rollo's mother had recently been reading a medical treatise in which an eminent physician stated that we all eat too much nowadays, and that the secret of a happy life is to lay off the carbohydrates to some extent. She was, therefore, delighted to observe the young man's moderation in the matter of food, and frequently held him up as an example to be noted and followed by little Lettice Willoughby, her granddaughter, who was a good and consistent trencherwoman, particularly rough on the puddings. Little Lettice, I should mention, was the daughter of Rollo's sister Enid, who lived in the neighbourhood. Mrs. Willoughby had been compelled to go away on a visit a few days before and had left her child with Mrs. Podmarsh during her absence.

You can fool some of the people all the time, but Lettice Willoughby was not of the type that is easily deceived. A nice, old-fashioned child would no doubt have accepted without questioning her grandmother's dictum that roly-poly pudding could not fail to hand a devastating wallop to the blood-pressure, and that to take two helpings of it was practically equivalent to walking right into the family vault. A child with less decided opinions of her own would have been impressed by the spectacle of her uncle refusing sustenance, and would have received without demur the statement that he did it because he felt that abstinence was good for his health. Lettice was a modern child and knew better. She had had experience of this loss of appetite and its

significance. The first symptom which had preceded the demise of poor old Ponto, who had recently handed in his portfolio after holding office for ten years as the Willoughby family dog, had been this same disinclination to absorb nourishment. Besides, she was an observant child, and had not failed to note the haggard misery in her uncle's eyes. She tackled him squarely on the subject one morning after breakfast. Rollo had retired into the more distant parts of the garden, and was leaning forward, when she found him, with his head buried in his hands.

"Hallo, uncle," said Lettice.

Rollo looked up wanly.

"Ah, child!" he said. He was fond of his niece.

"Aren't you feeling well, uncle?"

"Far, far from well."

"It's old age, I expect," said Lettice.

"I feel old," admitted Rollo. "Old and battered. Ah, Lettice, laugh and be gay while you can."

"All right, uncle."

'Make the most of your happy, careless, smiling, halcyon childhood."

"Right-o, uncle."

"When you get to my age, dear, you will realize that it is a sad, hopeless world. A world where, if you keep your head down, you forget to let the club-head lead: where, even if you do happen by a miracle to keep 'em straight with your brassie, you blow up on the green and foozle a six-inch putt."

Lettice could not quite understand what Uncle Rollo was talking about, but she gathered broadly that she had been correct in supposing him to be in a bad state, and her warm, childish heart was filled with pity for him. She walked thoughtfully away, and Rollo resumed his reverie.

Into each life, as the poet says, some rain must fall. So much had recently been falling into Rollo's that, when Fortune at last sent along a belated sunbeam, it exercised a cheering effect out of all proportion to its size. By this I mean that when, some four days after his conversation with Lettice, Mary Kent asked him to play golf with her, he read into the invitation a significance which only a lover could have seen in it. I will not go so far as to say that Rollo Podmarsh looked on Mary Kent's suggestion that they should have a round together as actually tantamount to a revelation of undying love; but he certainly regarded it as a most encouraging sign. It seemed to him that things were beginning to move, that Rollo Preferred were on a rising market. Gone was the gloom of the past days. He forgot those sad, solitary wanderings of his in the bushes at the bottom of the garden; he forgot that his mother had bought him a new set of winter woollies which felt like horsehair; he forgot that for the last few evenings his arrowroot had tasted rummy. His whole mind was occupied with the astounding fact that she had voluntarily offered to play golf with him, and he walked out on to the first tee filled with a yeasty exhilaration which nearly caused him to burst into song.

His whole mind was occupied with the astounding fact that she had voluntarily offered to play golf with him.

"How shall we play?" asked Mary. "I am a twelve. What is your handicap?"

Rollo was under the disadvantage of not actually possessing a handicap. He had a sort of private system of book-keeping of his own by which he took strokes over

if they did not seem to him to be up to sample, and allowed himself five-foot putts at discretion. So he had never actually handed in the three cards necessary for handicapping purposes.

"I don't exactly know," he said. "It's my ambition to get round in under a hundred, but I've never managed it yet."

"Never?"

"Never! It's strange, but something always seems to go wrong."

"Perhaps you'll manage it to-day," said Mary, encouragingly, so encouragingly that it was all that Rollo could do to refrain from flinging himself at her feet and barking like a dog. "Well, I'll start you two holes up, and we'll see how we get on. Shall I take the honour?"

She drove off one of those fair-to-medium balls which go with a twelve handicap. Not a great length, but nice and straight.

"Splendid!" cried Rollo, devoutly.

"Oh, I don't know," said Mary. "I wouldn't call it anything special."

Titanic emotions were surging in Rollo's bosom as he addressed his ball. He had never felt like this before, especially on the first tee—where as a rule he found himself overcome with a nervous humility.

"Oh, Mary! Mary!" he breathed to himself as he swung.

YOU who squander your golden youth fooling about on a bowling-green will not understand the magic of those three words. But if you were a golfer, you would realize that in selecting just that invocation to breathe to himself Rollo Podmarsh had hit, by sheer accident, on the ideal method of achieving a fine drive. Let me explain. The first two words, tensely breathed, are just sufficient to take a man with the proper slowness to the top of his swing; the first syllable of the second "Mary" exactly coincides with the striking of the ball; and the final "ry!" takes care of the follow-through. The consequence was that Rollo's ball, instead of hopping down the hill like an embarrassed duck, as was its usual practice, sang off the tee with a scream like a shell, nodded in passing to Mary's ball, where it lay some hundred and fifty yards down the course, and, carrying on from there, came to rest within easy distance of the green. For the first time in his golfing life Rollo Podmarsh had hit a nifty.

Mary followed the ball's flight with astonished eyes.

"But this will never do!" she exclaimed. "I can't possibly start you two up if you're going to do this sort of thing."

Rollo blushed.

"I shouldn't think it would happen again," he said. "I've never done a drive like that before."

"But it must happen again," said Mary, firmly. "This is evidently your day. If you don't get round in under a hundred to-day, I shall never forgive you."

Rollo shut his eyes, and his lips moved feverishly. He was registering a vow that, come what might, he would not fail her. A minute later he was holing out in three, one under bogey.

The second hole is the short lake-hole Bogey is three, and Rollo generally did it in four; for it was his custom not to count any balls he might sink in the water, but to start afresh with the one which happened to get over, and then take three putts. But to-day something seemed to tell him that he would not require the aid of this ingenious system. As he took his mashie from the bag, he *knew* that his first shot would soar successfully on to the green.

"Ah, Mary!" he breathed as he swung.

These subtleties are wasted on a worm, if you will pardon the expression, like yourself, who, possibly owing to a defective education, is content to spend life's spring-time rolling wooden balls across a lawn; but I will explain that in altering and shortening his soliloquy at this juncture Rollo had done the very thing any good pro. would have recommended. If he had murmured, "Oh, Mary! Mary!" as before he would have over-swung. "Ah, Mary!" was exactly right for a half-swing with the mashie. His ball shot up in a beautiful arc, and trickled to within six inches of the hole.

Mary was delighted. There was something about this big, diffident man which had appealed from the first to everything in her that was motherly.

"Marvellous!" she said. "You'll get a two. Five for the first two holes! Why, you simply must get round in under a hundred now." She swung, but too lightly; and her ball fell in the water. "I'll give you this," she said, without the slightest chagrin, for this girl had a beautiful nature. "Let's get on to the third. Four up! Why, you're wonderful!"

And not to weary you with too much detail, I will simply remark that, stimulated by her gentle encouragement, Rollo Podmarsh actually came off the ninth green with a medal score of forty-six for the half-round. A ten on the seventh had spoiled his card to some extent, and a nine on the eighth had not helped, but nevertheless here he was in forty-six, with the easier half of the course before him. He tingled all over—partly because he was wearing the new winter woollies to which I have alluded previously, but principally owing to triumph,

elation, and love. He gazed at Mary as Dante might have gazed at Beatrice on one of his particularly sentimental mornings.

Mary uttered an exclamation.

"Oh, I've just remembered," she exclaimed. "I promised to write last night to Jane Simpson and give her that new formula for knitting jumpers. I think I'll phone her now from the club-house and then it'll be off my mind. You go on to the tenth, and I'll join you there."

ROLLO proceeded over the brow of the hill to the tenth tee, and was filling in the time with practice-swings when he heard his name spoken.

"Good gracious, Rollo! I couldn't believe it was you at first."

He turned, to see his sister, Mrs. Willoughby, the mother of the child Lettice.

"Hallo!" he said. "When did you get back?"

"Late last night. Why, it's extraordinary!"

"Hope you had a good time. What's extraordinary? Listen, Enid. Do you know what I've done? Forty-six for the first nine! Forty-six! And holing out every putt."

"Oh, then that accounts for it."

"Accounts for *what?*"

"Why, your looking so pleased with life. I got an idea from Letty, when she wrote to me, that you were at death's door. Your gloom seems to have made a deep impression on the child. Her letter was full of it."

Rollo was moved.

"Dear little Letty! She is wonderfully sympathetic."

"Well, I must be off now," said Enid Willoughby. "I'm late. Oh, talking of Letty. Don't children say the funniest things! She wrote in her letter that you were very old and wretched and that she was going to put you out of your misery."

"Ha ha ha!" laughed Rollo.

"We had to poison poor old Ponto the other day, you know, and poor little Letty was inconsolable till we explained to her that it was really the kindest thing to do, because he was so old and ill. But just imagine her thinking of wanting to end *your* sufferings!"

"Ha ha!" laughed Rollo. "Ha ha h——!"

His voice trailed off into a broken gurgle. Quite suddenly a sinister thought had come to him.

The arrowroot had tasted rummy!

"Why, what on earth is the matter?" asked Mrs. Willoughby, regarding his ashen face.

Rollo could find no words. He yammered speechlessly. Yes, for several nights the arrowroot had tasted *very* rummy. Rummy! There was no other adjective. Even as he plied the spoon he had said to himself: "This arrowroot tastes rummy!" And—he uttered a sharp yelp as he remembered—it had been little Lettice who had brought it to him. He recollected being touched at the time by the kindly act.

"What *is* the matter, Rollo?" demanded Mrs. Willoughby, sharply. "Don't stand there looking like a dying duck."

"I *am* a dying duck," responded Rollo, hoarsely. "A dying man, I mean. Enid, that infernal child has poisoned me!"

"Don't be ridiculous! And kindly don't speak of her like that!"

"I'm sorry. I shouldn't blame her, I suppose. No doubt her motives were good. But the fact remains."

"Rollo, you're too absurd."

"But the arrowroot tasted rummy."

"I never knew you could be such an idiot," said his exasperated sister with sisterly outspokenness. "I thought you would think it quaint. I thought you would roar with laughter."

"I did—till I remembered about the rumminess of the arrowroot."

Mrs. Willoughby uttered an impatient exclamation and walked away.

Rollo Podmarsh stood on the tenth tee, a volcano of mixed emotions. Mechanically he pulled out his pipe and lit it. But he found that he could not smoke. In this supreme crisis of his life tobacco seemed to have lost its magic. He put the pipe back in his pocket and gave himself up to his thoughts. Now terror gripped him: anon a sort of gentle melancholy. It was so hard that he should be compelled to leave the world just as he had begun to hit 'em right.

And then in the welter of his thoughts there came one of practical value. To wit, that by hurrying to the doctor's without delay he might yet be saved. There might be antidotes.

He turned to go, and there was Mary Kent standing beside him with her bright, encouraging smile.

"I'm sorry I kept you so long," she said. "It's your honour. Fire away, and remember that you've got to do this nine in fifty-three at the outside."

Rollo's thoughts flitted wistfully to the snug surgery where Dr. Brown was probably sitting at this moment surrounded by the finest antidotes.

"Do you know, I think I ought to——"

"Of course you ought to," said Mary. "If you did the first nine in forty-six, you can't possibly take fifty-three coming in."

For one long moment Rollo continued to hesitate—a moment during which the instinct of self-preservation seemed as if it must win

the day. All his life he had been brought up to be nervous about his health, and panic gripped him. But there is a deeper, nobler instinct than that of self-preservation—the instinctive desire of a golfer who is at the top of his form to go on and beat his medal-score record. And little by little this grand impulse began to dominate Rollo. If, he felt, he went off now to take antidotes, the doctor might possibly save his life; but reason told him that never again would he be likely to do the first nine in forty-six. He would have to start all over afresh.

Rollo Podmarsh hesitated no longer. With a pale, set face he teed up his ball and drove.

IF I were telling this story to a golfer instead of to an excrescence—I use the word in the kindliest spirit—who spends his time messing about on a bowling-green, nothing would please me better than to describe shot by shot Rollo's progress over the remaining nine holes. Epics have been written with less material. But these details would, I am aware, be wasted on you. Let it suffice that by the time his last approach trickled on to the eighteenth green he had taken exactly fifty shots.

"Three for it!" said Mary Kent. "Steady now! Take it quite easy and be sure to lay your second dead."

It was prudent counsel, but Rollo was now thoroughly above himself. He had got his feet wet in a puddle on the sixteenth, but he did not care. His winter woollies seemed to be lined with ants, but he ignored them. All he knew was that he was on the last green in ninety-six, and he meant to finish in style. No tame three putts for him! His ball was five yards away, but he aimed for the back of the hole and brought his putter down with a whack. Straight and true the ball sped, hit the tin, jumped high in the air, and fell into the hole with a rattle.

"Oo!" cried Mary.

Rollo Podmarsh wiped his forehead and leaned dizzily on his putter. For a moment, so intense is the fervour induced by the game of games, all he could think of was that he had gone round in ninety-seven. Then, as one waking from a trance, he began to appreciate his position. The fever passed, and a clammy dismay took possession of him. He had achieved his life's ambition; but what now? Already he was conscious of a curious discomfort within him. He felt as he supposed Italians of the Middle Ages must have felt after dropping in to take pot-luck with the Borgias. It was hard. He had gone round in ninety-seven, but he could never take the next step in the career which he had mapped out in his dreams—the money-match with the lumbago-stricken Colonel Bodger.

Mary Kent was fluttering round him, bubbling congratulations, but Rollo sighed.

"Thanks," he said. "Thanks very much. But the trouble is, I'm afraid I'm going to die almost immediately. I've been poisoned!"

"Poisoned!"

"Yes. Nobody is to blame. Everything was done with the best intentions. But the fact remains."

"But I don't understand."

Rollo explained. Mary listened pallidly.

"Are you sure?" she gasped.

"Quite sure," said Rollo, gravely. "The arrowroot tasted rummy."

"But arrowroot always does."

Rollo shook his head.

"No," he said. "It tasted like warm blotting-paper, but not rummy."

Mary was sniffing.

"Don't cry," urged Rollo, tenderly. "Don't cry."

"But I must. And I've come out without a handkerchief."

"Permit me," said Rollo, producing one of her best from his left breast-pocket.

"I wish I had a powder-puff," said Mary.

"Allow me," said Rollo. "And your hair has become a little disordered. If I may——" And from the same reservoir he drew a handful of hairpins.

Mary gazed at these exhibits with astonishment.

"But these are mine," she said.

"Yes. I sneaked them from time to time."

"But why?"

"Because I loved you," said Rollo. And in a few moving sentences which I will not trouble you with he went on to elaborate this theme.

Mary listened with her heart full of surging emotions, which I cannot possibly go into if you persist in looking at that damned watch of yours. The scales had fallen from her eyes. She had thought slightingly of this man because he had been a little over-careful of his health, and all the time he had had within him the potentiality of heroism. Something seemed to snap inside her.

"Rollo!" she cried, and flung herself into his arms.

"Mary!" muttered Rollo, gathering her up.

"I told you it was all nonsense," said Mrs. Willoughby, coming up at this tense moment and going on with the conversation where she had left off. "I've just seen Letty, and she said she meant to put you out of your misery but the chemist wouldn't sell her any poison, so she let it go."

Rollo disentangled himself from Mary.

"What?" he cried.

Mrs. Willoughby repeated her remarks.

" You're sure ? " he said.

" Of course I'm sure."

" Then why did the arrowroot taste rummy ? "

" I made inquiries about that. It seems that mother was worried about your taking to smoking, and she found an advertisement in one of the magazines about the Tobacco Habit Cured in Three Days by a secret method without the victim's knowledge. It was a gentle, safe, agreeable method of eliminating the nicotine poison from the system, strengthening the weakened membranes, and overcoming the craving; so she put some in your arrowroot every night."

There was a long silence. To Rollo Podmarsh it seemed as though the sun had suddenly begun to shine, the birds to sing, and the grasshoppers to toot. All Nature was one vast substantial smile. Down in the valley by the second hole he caught sight of Wallace Chesney's Plus Fours gleaming as their owner stooped to play his shot, and it seemed to him that he had never in his life seen anything so lovely.

" Mary," he said, in a low, vibrant voice, " will you wait here for me ? I want to go into the club-house for a moment."

" To change your wet shoes ? "

" No ! " thundered Rollo. " I'm never going to change my wet shoes again in my life." He felt in his pocket, and hurled a box of patent pills far into the undergrowth. " But I *am* going to change my winter woollies. And when I've put those dashed barbed-wire entanglements into the club-house furnace, I'm going to 'phone to old Colonel Bodger. I hear his lumbago's worse than ever. I'm going to fix up a match with him for a shilling a hole. And if I don't lick the boots off him you can break the engagement ! "

" My hero ! " murmured Mary.

Rollo kissed her, and with long, resolute steps strode to the club-house.

Rollo Podmarsh wiped his forehead and leaned dizzily on his putter. For a moment all he could think of was that he had gone round in ninety-seven.

When I was PETER PAN

By

NINA BOUCICAULT
CECILIA LOFTUS
PAULINE CHASE
MADGE TITHERADGE

UNITY MORE
FAY COMPTON
FAITH CELLI
EDNA BEST
JOAN MACLEAN

With sidelights on

SIR JAMES BARRIE

NINA BOUCICAULT.

WHEN first I began to study the part of Peter Pan I remember going to Sir James Barrie and asking him, since I was to be the first Peter, if he would tell me something of his conception of the part and how it should be played. I thought that he would naturally have a great deal to say on the subject, that he might perhaps explain to me how he visualized Peter, and give me his ideas as to how the character should be developed. But I was doomed to disappointment. "Peter is a bird," he said to me in that quiet, level voice of his, "and he is one day old." And that was all I had to go on. At rehearsals, it is true, he would drop an occasional hint, but if one wanted to ask him a question one could never be quite sure of finding him. At one moment he would be sitting in the stalls, and the next he had slipped out in his elusive way and disappeared.

But to me "Peter Pan" has always been much more than a fairy play for children. The fairy trappings are only a setting for the development of a serious idea. From beginning to end the story is a rather wistful commentary on human nature, taking as its theme the supreme selfishness of man and the supreme unselfishness of woman. Peter's conduct is typically masculine in its selfishness, its swagger, its sublime egotism. When he relates how once he went back to his parents' house he utters no word of regret for all the anxiety his thoughtlessness has caused; what he resents, because it hurts his pride, is that another little boy has usurped his place and was lying in his cot. Again, when he is going away, and Wendy, longing in her woman's heart for a word of love from him, asks him wistfully if he has anything to say to her, he can find nothing to say except that he has had a very jolly time. Human Peter! And when Wendy reminds him that if he

goes to live in the tree-tops she may never see him again, he comforts her with the magnanimous assurance that she can visit him every year and do his spring-cleaning. What delicious satire!

His treatment of Tinker Bell is just as callous—Tinker Bell, who is always watching over him, always at his elbow to serve him when he needs her help, always ready to encourage him with her musical voice. When, woman-like, she grows jealous and pulls the children's hair, Peter tells them to take no notice of her; she is only the scullery-maid in the Never-Never Land who washes his pots and pans! Yet it is Tinker Bell who drinks Peter's poisoned medicine, and it is only then, when he realizes that he is in danger of losing her, that he recognizes her true worth and, panic-stricken, cries, "Save her!"

It is all so human. Yet Peter's fairy qualities redeem him, and we cannot help loving him, just as we love the selfish little boy because of his boyishness, though we may sigh over his selfishness.

It is Sir James Barrie's blending of these two characters which makes the part of Peter Pan so fascinating and so difficult to understand. Peter is twelve and Peter is three hundred years old; not one nor the other, but both.

I shall never forget the strenuous times we had during rehearsals. Fifteen to eighteen hours a day was nothing uncommon, and before they were over both Sir Gerald du Maurier and I had lost our voices. It was the first production of the play, and there were so many points that needed constant rehearsing. Apart from the actual play, the flying, the lighting, the dancing had each to be rehearsed separately until it was perfect, and often there would be calls for three separate rehearsals at three different theatres in the course of the morning.

But the first night brought us our reward. The gasp of surprise that greeted me as I flew in through the window and the enthusiasm at the end of the first act were well worth all the hard work. The audience were splendid; I don't think they missed a single point. I remember that I had been rather anxious about the scene where Peter appeals to the audience to clap if they believe in fairies. "Suppose they don't clap?" I had asked. "What do I do then?" But clap! I think everyone in the house believed in fairies. And I am sure the play took them by surprise. It was a wonderful cast—Gerald du Maurier, Dorothea Baird, Hilda Trevelyan—but the play was so utterly different from any other play that the audience, I fancy, were swept off their feet.

CECILIA LOFTUS.

My first introduction to Peter Pan was when I went to see Maud Adams, the American Peter, play the part in New York. I thought what a glorious part it must be to play, with no idea that I should ever play it; but by an extraordinary coincidence I received a cable from Mr. Charles Frohman the very next morning, asking if I could sail immediately and play Peter Pan in London. I rushed to the cable office, cabled that I was sailing at once, left America within a couple of days, crossed the Atlantic in a state of dreadful anxiety lest something might go wrong at the last moment, and, still hardly able to believe in my good fortune, found myself interviewing Sir James Barrie and Mr. Boucicault at the Duke of York's Theatre.

Nina Boucicault, the creator of the part, as Peter Pan.

I was rather frightened at meeting Sir James, but I soon discovered that he was as shy and as timid of me as I was of him.

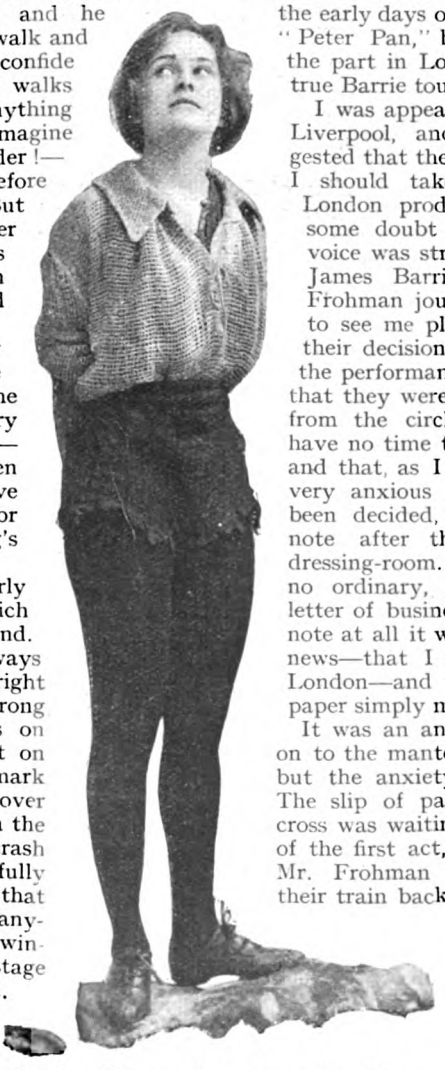
At rehearsals he sat in front with Mr. Boucicault, but never by word or look did he give any hint as to whether he was pleased with my performance, and I remember how depressed I became because I imagined that he was disappointed. Later, when I stayed with him at his house and came to know him better, I realized that he is rarely demonstrative, always rather shy and reticent, seeming to live in a world of his own.

I have many pleasant recollections of my visit. We would walk up and down the garden for perhaps an hour at a time and scarcely exchange a word, and he seemed quite happy just to walk and be silent. He did, however, confide to me during one of our walks that he could never write anything to order—one can hardly imagine "Peter Pan" written to order!—and that it might be years before he wrote another play. But with grown-ups he never seems quite at home; it is only the children that can get really close to him and share his fairy kingdom.

I realized, too, during my visit, how much of a boy he is at heart. During meals he would have his big dog—very much like Nana in the play—in the room, and often between the courses he would leave the table and lie on the floor with his arm round the dog's neck.

Of the play I particularly remember one incident which might have had a tragic end. When Peter flies he must always take off from exactly the right spot or he will fly in the wrong direction. There are marks on the stage to guide him, but on one occasion I missed the mark and was swung right out over the stalls. It seemed that on the backward swing I must crash into the scenery, but so skilfully were the wires manipulated that I swung, without touching anything, straight through the window at the back of the stage through which I had entered.

I think it is in the combination in him of the mature knowledge of a man and the wonderful imagination of a child that the secret of Peter Pan's charm lies. But neither Peter nor his creator is really capable of explanation. Fairies were never meant to be explained.



Pauline Chase, who appeared as Peter Pan fourteen hundred times.

PAULINE CHASE.

Recollections of "Peter Pan" naturally bring with them recollections of Sir James Barrie, to whose delicate imagination Peter owes his existence and whose whimsical spirit permeates the whole piece. There has always seemed to me to be much in common between Peter Pan and his creator—the child-like simplicity and eagerness, the air of wistfulness, the spirit of the fairies and the elves.

I remember an incident that occurred in the early days of my association with "Peter Pan," before I had played the part in London, which has the true Barrie touch.

I was appearing as Peter Pan at Liverpool, and it had been suggested that the following Christmas I should take the part in the London production. There was some doubt as to whether my voice was strong enough, and Sir James Barrie and Mr. Charles Frohman journeyed to Liverpool to see me play and to come to their decision. I saw them before the performance, and they told me that they were going to watch me from the circle, that they might have no time to see me afterwards, and that, as I should naturally be very anxious to know what had been decided, they would send a note after the last act to my dressing-room. But it was to be no ordinary, prosaic, unromantic letter of business. If I received a note at all it would bring me good news—that I was to be Peter in London—and would be a slip of paper simply marked with a cross.

It was an anxious Peter that flew on to the mantelpiece that evening, but the anxiety did not last long. The slip of paper with its fateful cross was waiting for me at the end of the first act, and Sir James and Mr. Frohman had left to catch their train back to London.

At rehearsals for the London production Sir James Barrie was often present and took an active part in them. He was not always the quiet, rather timid Sir

James he is generally supposed to be. When he became excited or annoyed —as he did sometimes—he would break into a flow of Scotch so broad that it was difficult for anyone to understand him.

I believe the children in the piece were as great an attraction for him as anything. He would spend a great deal of time talking to them and telling them stories, and on one occasion was responsible for completely turning the head of one of the juvenile members of the cast. Anthony Brown will do for his name, and he was, I believe, the rear portion of the famous crocodile. Anthony was given half a crown by Sir James, and so impressed was he with his immense importance that his tip was invested in the purchase of some cards, which he proudly exhibited to us, printed something as follows :—

Peter Pan making his entry through the window.

> ANTHONY BROWN.
> Hind legs of the Crocodile.
> Charles Frohman's Company.

It was such incidents as these—and there were many of them during the fourteen hundred times that I played Peter—the whimsical spirit that pervaded the piece, and the spontaneous enthusiasm of the children that thronged the theatre, that made Peter Pan the most delightful part I have ever played.

And the letters! They poured in to me during the run of the piece—thousands of the quaintest and most wonderful letters I have ever read. Almost all of them were from children: little boys who thirsted to be pirate chiefs, little girls who begged me to let them marry me, and both boys and girls who entreated me to teach them how to fly. It was the flying that captivated them all. One had only to hear the cries of wonder and surprise when Peter flew in through the window to realize with what unerring instinct Sir James Barrie had chosen this means of appealing to the imagination of a little child.

MADGE TITHERADGE.

My first recollection of Peter is being taken, as a small girl, to the pit, to see Miss Boucicault's exquisite creation, and when I knew I was to play the part myself I felt that I was far too healthy and boyish to even hope to be able to convey, as she did, the wistfulness and sense of "faery" that had so impressed itself on my childish imagination.

My next most vivid impression was the tremendously hard work of the rehearsals—the rushing about, the flying, now above and now below the stage, the rescue of Wendy—oh! how my knees ached—how tired I was! I lost a stone in weight. Then came the afternoon of the first day, and I was paralysed with fear.

Sir James Barrie never attended rehearsals, and I had only met him once, when he was as shy as I was, and we hardly said a word. During one of the intervals at the first performance a knock came at my dressing-room door. "Who's there?" I called, brusquely (far too nervous to want to see anyone till my ordeal was over). "A friend," came a small voice, and then Sir James came in, and kissing me on both cheeks said: "You're wonderful!" How happy I was!

The greatest enchantment to me while I was Peter were the audible comments of the babies in my audience, as, for instance, when Hook poisoned the medicine, all their tiny voices screaming out at once: "Peter, *don't* drink it! Oh, Peter!"

UNITY MORE.

The part of Peter Pan was one that I had always longed to play, and when I did play it I discovered that to become Peter on the stage was to cease to be anyone else throughout the run of the piece. Not only was I Peter to everyone, from Sir James Barrie to the most humble stage-hand; I was actually Peter to myself.

No other part that I have taken has fascinated me so completely as did that of Peter Pan. To me it was not a play at all; it was all real—as real as it was to the children who came to see the play, if one can call that delicate web of subtle fancy by so commonplace a name.

There always seemed, too, to be some delightful quality in the atmosphere of the theatre when "Peter Pan" was being played which was not there at other times. Whether he was present or not, the spirit of Barrie was everywhere and we seemed to be actually living in the world of Peter Pan.

It was the same during rehearsals, when Sir James Barrie was very often present. Not that he usually took much part in them. Most of the time he would spend sitting in the stalls, smoking his pipe—he never appeared without his pipe—saying little and apparently lost in thought. One of the few things Sir James said to me during the rehearsals was this. On the day of the final dress-rehearsal, "I should like you," he said, kindly, "to forget all you have learnt and play Peter in your own way." Actually, I fancy not many details escaped him. He was, I remember, very anxious that I should be as boyish a Peter as possible, and that my hair should be done in such a way that my ears could be seen.

Every child who has seen Peter would like to be Peter, but I think they might be a little less eager if they realized how strenuously Peter has to work. He must be quite a good acrobat. In the lagoon scene, where Peter appears first in one part of the lagoon and then in another, he has to face a most exhausting ordeal. It means climbing a ladder, appearing through a trap-door, down the ladder again and up another, with only about ten seconds between each appearance, with the result that the first few performances left me covered with bruises.

And flying is not always as pleasant as it looks. In the first act, when Peter flies on to the mantelpiece, there was a monkey fixed to the wall above the fireplace so that Peter could grasp it and steady himself if he did not land quite firmly. At one performance I was rather unsteady when I landed, and seized the monkey's tail to steady myself. But the tail came out and I collapsed into the fireplace, and must, I am afraid, have seriously shaken the children's faith in Peter's flying skill.

The shouts of advice and encouragement from the children in the aud ence are part of the charm of "Peter Pan." One piece of advice in particular I remember, given me when I was sitting beside Wendy on the bed. "Go on, Peter!" cried a small boyish voice. "Go on, Peter—kiss her!"

To me Barrie is so wonderful because he seems to know instinctively the feelings of children and also the feelings of mothers. I am sure he is half a fairy himself. How could he know all this otherwise?

FAY COMPTON.

If Peter Pan could not fly, and had to make his entrance through the door like an ordinary human being, instead of flying through the window, he would not be the same wonderful Peter that he is to the children who flock to see him every Christmas. It is because he is so different from them and can do what they cannot do that he grips their attention and holds them fascinated from the rise to the fall of the curtain.

It was for very much the same reason that the part of Peter appealed to me. It is entirely different from any other part, and I am sure that the flying was just as thrilling an experience to me as it always is to the children in the audience.

I had always heard that the part of Peter Pan was a very exhausting one, and that to play it successfully one had to be quite a competent gymnast. But I loved the gymnastic part of it. Climbing ladders, appearing through trap-doors, and "flying" on the end of a wire were the greatest fun, and added immensely to my enjoyment of the part—and I don't think I have ever enjoyed playing any part so much. Playing Peter Pan was like joining in a very jolly game of which I never grew tired, and we behind the scenes, especially the children in the cast, enjoyed ourselves every bit as much as those who came to watch us.

As regards the acting, Peter Pan is a part that has to be taken very seriously. To interpret it truly is a task that would tax the powers of any artiste. Sir James Barrie, with his exquisitely delicate imagination and his deep knowledge of human nature, has endowed Peter with all the elusive qualities of a fairy and all the boyishness of a boy, and to portray both sides of his character, to be the fairy without forgetting the boy and the boy without forgetting the fairy, is easier in fancy than in fact. Peter can be pictured in the imagination more readily than he can be played on the stage.

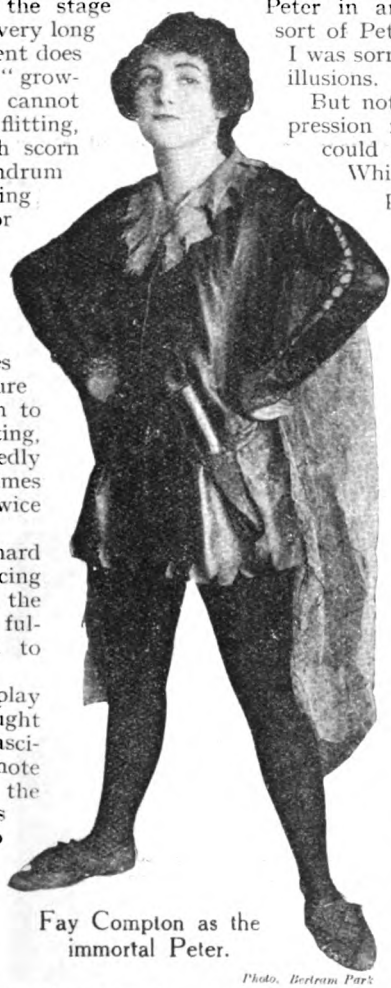
FAITH CELLI.

To play the part of Peter Pan as it deserves to be played, I think two things are essential. One must possess both the mind of a fairy and the physique of an elephant; and who can achieve two such contradictory qualifications? The need for the first is obvious to all who have seen the play, but why the second? The answer is simply this. Peter is on the stage for the greater part of a very long play, and never for a moment does he behave like an ordinary "growing-up" person. Peter cannot keep still. He is for ever flitting, dancing, pirouetting. With scorn he rejects the usual humdrum methods of entering or leaving the stage. These are not for Peter. He prefers to fly through windows, climb down trees, swim across lagoons, or swarm the side of a pirate ship. Now these delightful adventures call for no mean expenditure of energy. And even when to the audience Peter is resting, he is, in reality, hurriedly changing his clothes—five times during the play—and this twice daily.

But in spite of all its hard work Peter is an entrancing part, and I confess one of the ambitions of my life was fulfilled when I was asked to play it.

I feel sure no one can play this part without being caught by its elflike charm and fascination, but to me the keynote of Peter is contained in the line in which he tells us how, when he returned to his mother, "*the window was barred.*" The tragedy of that barred window was what I tried to keep in my mind throughout the play. To me it explained Peter even in his merriest moods. Peter was never sad, but he was very often wistful.

Sir James Barrie? All I can remember is a thoughtful, silent face; and, of course—a pipe.



Fay Compton as the immortal Peter.

Photo, Bertram Park

EDNA BEST.

I think what struck me most forcibly when I played the part of Peter Pan was the difference of the impression of the piece received behind the footlights from that received in front of them. When first I saw "Peter Pan" from the front of the house as a child, little dreaming that later on I should actually be Peter, it was all sheer wonder and delight. Peter really flew; Captain Hook was a real pirate; the crocodile was a real crocodile. When I went behind the scenes and came to understand how the various effects were produced, and had to study and analyse the character of Peter in an effort to make him the sort of Peter he was intended to be, I was sorry for the shattering of the illusions.

But not even the unromantic impression received behind the scenes could rob Peter of his charm. While engaged in the strictly professional business of working up the part one feels the glamour of it, and is conscious of a subtle, captivating influence. It is difficult to describe wherein lies the charm of the piece; the chief charm is, I think, that it is indescribable.

Everyone, I suppose, who has played Peter Pan will agree that it is their favourite part. It is so utterly different from any other, and I think few parts can be quite so difficult. However much one may strive to catch the spirit of the play, and to interpret the character of Peter as one feels it should be interpreted, one is always conscious of falling very far short of the Peter of one's imagination, and of Peter as conceived by Sir James Barrie.

I remember that my first interview with Sir James Barrie, when I was introduced to him with a view of taking the part, plunged me into the depths of depression. I met him prepared to discuss the matter, to hear, perhaps, his ideas of how the part should be played, and to leave, I hoped, with a promise that I should play it. But that, I discovered, was not the Barrie way. We had a long interview. He talked to me charmingly about all kinds of subjects, but never once did he make the slightest reference to Peter Pan, and when I left I was firmly convinced that he did not think

me suitable, but had not the heart to tell me so.

Later on, however, during rehearsals, when I wrote to him asking for his advice on certain points, he was not so reticent. Sitting in his book-lined room, with its two beautiful fireplaces and its wonderful view across the river, he told me a little of his conception of Peter. "There are only two possible ways of playing Peter," he said to me. "Either he must be the whimsical, fairy creature that Nina Boucicault made him, or he must be the lovable tomboy of Pauline Chase. There is no other way." And on another occasion he told me that he always thought of Peter Pan as 'a little Napoleon.'

If Peter is ever to appear on the stage as we picture him in our minds, I think the part will have to be played by a boy. Probably the boy who is young enough and yet has the necessary ability to play the part does not exist; but I think that if he could be found we should get a far truer interpretation of Sir James Barrie's and even of our own conception of Peter. I should like to see on the stage the Peter Pan of Kensington Gardens.

But "Peter Pan" is really a children's play. To them Peter on the stage is real and not an interpretation of a character. At the *matinées*, when the house is packed with children, Peter is in his right element. At nights, when more grown-ups are present, there is not the same spontaneous excitement, and the scenes that evoke laughter or tears are not the same as those that draw laughter or tears from the children. The play, of course, was originally written for a little boy by one to whom the mind of a child is like an open book—which reminds me that, if some of my illusions were shattered when I played the part, one at least of Sir James Barrie's suffered the same fate.

He told me once how he took the little boy for whom the play was written to see it at the theatre, and when the afternoon of breathless wonder was over and they were on their way home, Sir James asked him which part he had enjoyed most. "Well," came the reply, "I think the part I liked best was tearing up the programme and dropping the bits on people's heads."

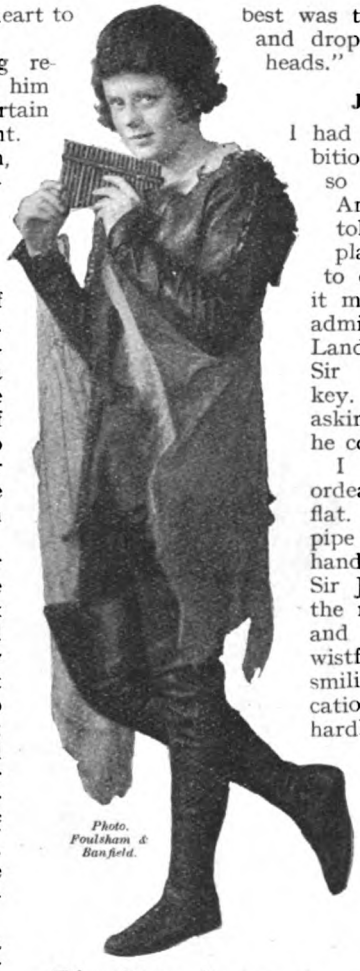


Photo. Foulsham & Banfield.

Edna Best, who is again appearing as Peter Pan this season.

JOAN MACLEAN.

I had always had a secret ambition to play Peter Pan, and so many people, both in America and in England, told me that I ought to play the part that I began to consider seriously whether it might be possible to gain admittance to the Never-Never Land to which the inaccessible Sir James Barrie held the key. At last I wrote to him, asking if I might be Peter, and he consented to see me.

I shall never forget the ordeal of the interview at his flat. The whole time, with his pipe in his mouth and his hands clasped behind his back, Sir James paced up and down the room, peering at me now and then with those rather wistful eyes of his, never smiling or giving me any indication of his thoughts, and hardly speaking except to ask me to remove my hat, to stand up, or to let him see me walk. When I left I had to be satisfied with a promise that if he changed his mind and decided to let me be Peter he would let me know.

Eventually the part was given to me, and I entered on the most wonderful experience I have ever had. From the beginning of the rehearsals I have none but happy memories of "Peter Pan," and the happiest, I think, is of a letter sent to me by the original Peter—Nina Boucicault—asking me if I believed in fairies and telling me a little of what she felt about Peter. Later on, though I had never met her, she came to see me and talked to me about him, helping me to understand the difficult part I was to play, and finally lent me her original dagger, which I used at the first and last performances.

Playing Peter Pan made me feel that I should never want to play any other part afterwards. There is an indescribable tenderness and pathos about the piece, and I remember that in many scenes it was all I could do to keep back the tears. I think

it is impossible to speak the beautiful lines which Sir James Barrie puts into the mouths of his characters without feeling a lump in the throat, and Sir James himself arouses much the same feelings. I have seen him wandering behind the scenes with his rather forlorn and wistful air that makes one instinctively long to comfort him, and he has always reminded me of a fairy locked out of fairyland, who has found the world a sad place and takes refuge from its sadness in his own fairy imagination.

And how he hates the limelight! Once, during the rehearsals, Wendy and I went to his flat to go through our parts with him. Someone must have told a reporter, for the story appeared in the Press and Sir James was very angry that his name had been dragged into the papers. For some days he did not come to the theatre, and when he did return his looks were so black, he was so silent, and he refused so obstinately to notice us when we tried to coax a smile from him, that Wendy and I agreed that we must go to him and apologize. We told him we were very sorry for what had happened and begged him not to be angry any more, as he was making us all miserable. "Angry?" said Sir James. "Look at my hat." We looked, but could see nothing amiss. "You can always tell when I'm angry," he explained kindly, "because then I wear my hat the wrong way round." And so the cloud passed by

Sir James was always anxious that everything should be as realistic as possible, particularly the fight between Captain Hook and Peter. On one occasion Hook and I, determined that there should be plenty of reality, clenched our teeth and went at it hammer and tongs, while Sir James sat watching. Suddenly he rose abruptly from his seat, carried his chair to the other side of the stage, and sat down again without speaking a word. Hook and I broke away and waited. Something, we felt sure, was wrong. "That's quite right," Sir James explained to me seriously. "Go on—it's just what I want; but you're pulling such funny faces, and I can see them better over here."

It is a strange sensation at first to play to an audience of children. One must get accustomed to the interruptions, which are sometimes rather disconcerting. I remember one which is typical. When the Red Indians appeared in their wonderful dresses, which one would expect to delight the heart of the youngsters, they failed to impress at least one member of the audience. "I say, mother," cried a big voice from a very small boy, "I think they look perfect fools, don't you?"

When I was Peter Pan I actually did believe in fairies, and when the piece was taken off I was sorry to leave the Never-Never Land for the unromantic world again. Even the bruises—and Peter gets plenty of them—were precious, and there was a big lump in my throat as I watched the last of them disappear and was forced to realize I was dear little Peter no longer.

One Thing Leads to Another

by

STACY AUMONIER

ILLUSTRATED BY REGINALD CLEAVER

I.

"THAT'S all very well," said Mr. William Egger. And after a pause he repeated: "That's all very well."

In his shirt-sleeves, carpet slippers, and embroidered skull-cap, he shuffled restlessly from the breakfast-table to the window, in the sitting-room above his general shop. His wife began to clear away, with the obvious suggestion that it was her place to make herself scarce. This was a father's duty. The boy stood sheepishly staring out of the window. The day was going to be scorching.

Of course it was his duty. It was always a father's duty. He must be firm, admonishing, a little forensic. And all these things came a little difficult to William. He was no orator. It was too early in the morning. He had breakfasted well, and at the back of his mind lurked the old hint of palliation: "Boys will be boys." He cleared his throat and rumbled:—

"You say pinching apples isn't stealing. You're wrong. Anything you do becomes a habit. This is the second time Farmer James has written to complain. That doesn't mean that it's only twice you've stolen his apples. It means it's only twice you've been found out."

"I swear it's only twice," said Tom, sulkily.

"That'll do. Don't answer me back. You acknowledge you stole them. Well, what does it mean? You took what didn't belong to yer. It's sinful. You steal apples, and it becomes a habit. Perhaps to-morrow you steal pears, then peaches, then grapes——"

"I've never stolen no grapes!"

"Be quiet, will yer! It's just a question of—one thing leading to another. The downward path, the slippery slope, the—er—Gadarene swine, and so on. If you take these things p'r'aps one day you'll pinch a little money out of the till—my till!—p'r'aps someone else's penknife, umbreller, or what-not. That's not the end. You're slipping down. Stealing leads to other things—weakness, giving way all the time. In the end, drinking, forgery, goin' to the pictures, all the deadly sins——"

Mrs. Egger had re-entered the room with a brush and crumb-tray, and she exclaimed:—

"Tom's a very bad boy, William. But you needn't drag in all the deadly sins. One doesn't need to go to hell for pinchin' a few apples."

William showed annoyance. Just like Agnes—to put him on to the job and then interfere.

"I tell yer—one thing leads to another," he barked.

"Yes, but——"

"There's no 'but' about it. Sin is sin, and once on the slippery path, down yer go."

"It's not so bad as all that," replied Mrs. Egger, quickly. "What I ses is—it's

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not nice it getting about, us with the shop and that——"

"Oh! . . . ugh!"

The whole matter might have petered out at that point, but for the fact that, in the disturbance caused by Farmer James's letter, Mrs. Egger had left the bacon-dish on the sideboard. On the bacon-dish were several rinds from their breakfast. Ambling between the window and the sideboard, Mr. Egger's attention had been divided between this dish and a company of fowls in the yard below. The situation was a little too embarrassing to glance at his son. When his wife stood up in defence of the young man he pretended to be annoyed, but he was really relieved. He had landed into this tirade of abuse and admonition, and didn't see quite how to end gracefully. In a moment of distraction he picked up one of the bacon-rinds and flung it out to the fowls.

For the purposes of this story it is necessary to drop the curtain on this domestic scene for the moment and follow the adventures of the bacon-rind.

THE fowls were white Leghorns, and from their appearance they fared sumptuously. Doubtless a small general shop is a liberal fount for scraps, apart from the supply of grain which their kind demands. But there is something about a bacon-rind that is irresistible to nearly all living creatures. Dogs will fight to the death for it, cats desert their kittens, birds and poultry perform prodigious acts in the way of running, doubling, and ducking. The bacon-rind is never safe until safely ensconced in the maw of some hungry champion.

On this occasion three hens rushed at the bacon-rind, and one, a little longer in the legs than the others, got possession. She scampered towards the hedge, followed by seven others, clucking and screaming. Before the hedge was reached the rind had changed hands—beaks, rather—three times. The original bird had regained possession and was about to force her way through a gap, when the cock flew from a savoury refuse heap and savagely pecked her neck. Scandalous that a female should be allowed to enjoy this essentially masculine luxury! There was a rough-and-tumble in the hedge, and the cock got possession. But do not think that he was allowed to enjoy his triumph in peace. The fight was by no means over. So great is the appeal of bacon-rind that the weak will attack the strong, wives will turn on their husbands, the desperate will perform feats of valour which no other incentive could stir them to.

The cock half-flew, half-ran, across the angle of the adjoining field, followed by five of his screaming females. He knew a thing or two, and doubled under an alder-bush and entered a narrow coppice that ran alongside the road. But when he arrived there three of the hens were still on his track.

Now it is one thing to capture a piece of bacon-rind, but quite another thing to swallow it. The latter operation requires several uninterrupted seconds, with the head thrown back. Even at the last moment a rival may seize the end projecting and a fierce tug-of-war take place. And that happened in this case. He ran and ran and ran. He had no recollection afterwards how far he had run, but at last he seemed to have outdistanced his pursuers. There was a moment's respite somewhere by the side of someone's kitchen-garden. He threw

The cock half-flew, half-ran, across the angle of the adjoining field, followed by five of his screaming females.

back his head, closed his eyes, and began to gulp the succulent morsel inch by inch. Oh, the ecstasy of that oleaginous orgy! Was there ever such a rind?

And then, of course, the thing happened! Someone had seized the end just as it was disappearing, and was tugging it back energetically. Curse! He opened his eyes and blinked. If it was one of his own hens, he would—well, give her a very bad time. Perhaps kill her, perhaps only neglect her. But no! As he looked into his rival's eyes he realized that he was up against a large brown cock, one of the Rhode Island wretches that belonged to Mr. Waite, the wheelwright. Venom and hatred stirred in his blood. When this little matter of the rind was determined he would settle with this Rhode Island upstart. He was somewhat exhausted and nearly two inches of the rind had been reclaimed by his rival. Backwards and forwards they swung, their feathers sticking out with sinister promise of the real fight that was to follow. The white cock had regained a quarter of an inch when the rind snapped. He gulped his remaining portion, and drew back ready for the fray. Both beaks were lowered, when suddenly the white cock beheld an approaching terror, a large, savage mongrel dog rushing towards them. With a scream he turned, flapped his wings, dashed through the bushes, and left the brown cock to his fate.

II.

"JIM! Quick! Quick!" exclaimed Mrs. Waite, running out of the cottage. Jim Waite appeared at the door of his shed, a hammer in his hand.

"What is it? What's the matter, Ida?" he called out, running towards her.

"That dog! That savage mongrel dog of the Beans has killed one of our fowls! O Lordy, it's the cock, too! It's killed the cock!"

"Where is it?"

"Look! Running across the road."

Jim Waite was angry. This was not the first time that mongrel dog of the Beans had raised his ire. It always growled savagely at him and at his wife and children. On one other occasion he had found a fowl murdered, and he had had his suspicions.

He ran into the road in pursuit. The dog, scared at first by the shouts of Mrs. Waite, had left its victim and darted under a culvert the other side of the road. Jim bent down, picked up a stone, flung it into the opening of the culvert, and, as chance would have it, hit the dog on its flank. The dog then became angry. It saw red, and likewise Mr. Waite. It ran out and round him in a circle, growling, and then made a sudden rush. Jim was a powerfully-built man, and he brought the hammer down plomp on to the mongrel's skull. It would kill no more fowls.

The matter might have ended there had not Mr. Bean, the retired corn-chandler, at that moment turned the corner in his dog-cart and beheld Jim with the hammer in his hand, standing above the corpse of his pet dog. Now Mr. Bean was a thin, wiry man of rather bucolic and eccentric temper. Moreover, he had a great affection for this most unpopular dog of indeterminate breed. Long before he reached the group he roared out:—

"What the devil have you done?"

Equally angry, Mr. Waite roared back:—

"I've ridded the neighbourhood of this vile beast that's just murdered my cock!"

"Your cock! What the devil does it matter about your cock!"

The dog-cart pulled up, and Mr. Bean jumped out. Before either of the men could say another word, Mrs. Waite pointed to the other side of the hedge and screamed:—

"Look! Our only cock! Your blamed dog's killed it. It's always trying to bite everyone."

Mr. Bean followed the direction where she was pointing. His side-whiskers shaking, he exploded:—

"Well, then, it was in my ground. If your cock comes into my ground, my dog is justified in killing it."

"There was another cock there——"

"Be damned to that!"

Mr. Waite appeared, a formidable figure towering in the road, with the hammer in his hand, as he said, savagely:—

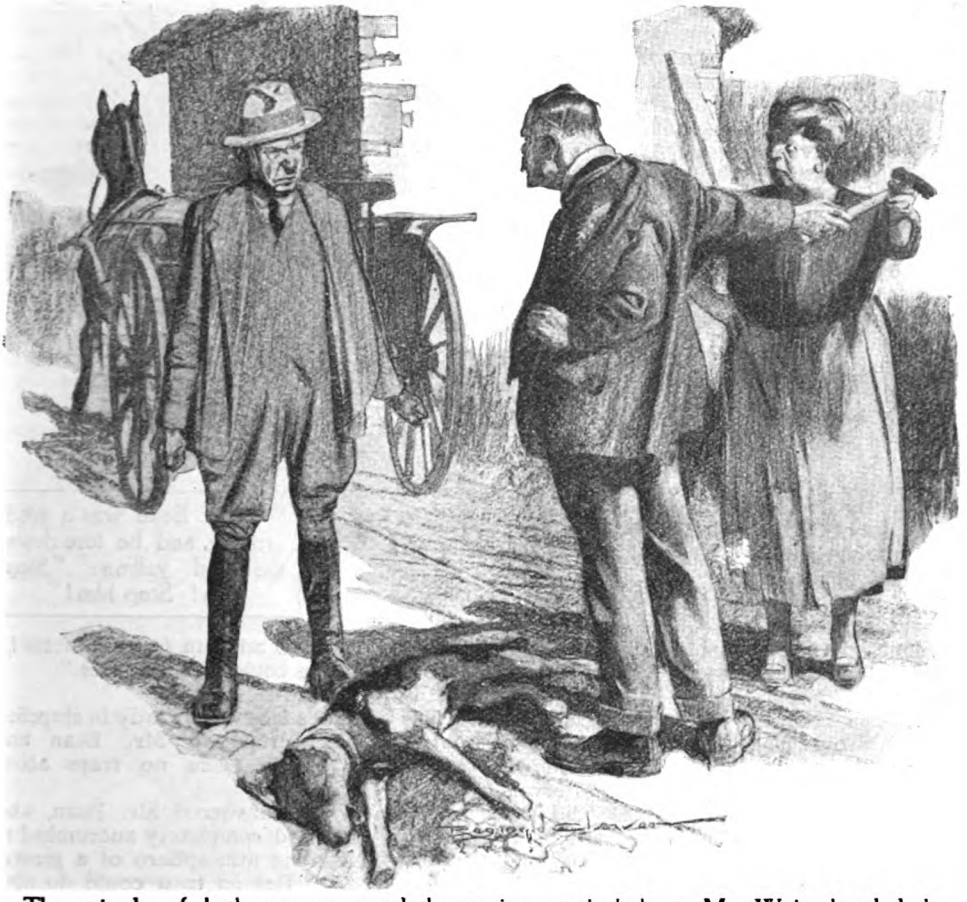
"You shall pay for my cock!"

Nevertheless Mr. Bean replied with spirit: "You shall pay for my dog!"

"Dog, you call it? Bah!"

III.

THE attitude of both men appeared threatening, particularly as Mr. Waite handed the hammer to his wife and began to take off his coat. What would have been the immediate outcome is difficult to say. But the uproar and disturbance upset the rather highly-strung young horse, which began to trot off up the road. Mr. Bean did not notice this till it had gone about twenty yards. Then he called after it, but the horse took no notice. So Mr. Bean began to run. He would probably have caught it, but a little farther on a farm-hand, late for his breakfast, came swinging down a narrow lane into the road on a solid-tyre bicycle. He did not expect to find a horse and trap there, and he just ducked under the horse's nose and his back tyre struck the left shaft, and he was thrown. So far as the horse was concerned, that put the lid



The attitude of both men appeared threatening, particularly as Mr. Waite handed the hammer to his wife and began to take off his coat.

on things. He put back his ears and bolted, with Mr. Bean a kind of forlorn "also ran."

The farm-hand picked up his bicycle and swore. Jim Waite picked up the dead dog, and flung it into Mr. Bean's strip of land. Mrs. Waite picked up the dead cock, and muttering to Mr. Waite: "Well, we'd meant to kill this week, anyway," she took it inside and plucked it while it was warm.

Mr. Bean was a good runner, and he tore down the road, yelling: "Stop him! Stop him!"

He had lost his dog, and the prospect of losing his horse also spurred him on. But a young horse, even encumbered by a dog-cart, can run faster than the fastest man. The distance between them widened. He could see the dog-cart swaying and swerving, but the horse stuck to the road. Mr. Bean ran over half a mile. It was a deserted part of the country, and nothing passed him. The horse and cart were out of sight. He rested for a few moments, and then ran on. When he had travelled about another four hundred yards he beheld a group of dark objects at the angle of two narrow roads. For some moments he could not distinguish what they were, but his instinct told him that something had happened. On approaching nearer, he beheld a large car, apparently jammed into the embankment by the side of the road; his dog-cart appeared to be hugging its mud-guards. Two or three figures were moving about, but there was no sign of the horse. He rushed up, panting. When within hailing distance, he called out:—

"What's up? What's happened? Where's my horse?"

IV.

THREE busy men turned and regarded him. One was a young chauffeur. The other two were a curious contrast: a tall, white-moustached man of the Indian Army type and a thin, æsthetic young man in the early twenties.

Now Mr. Bean was in the mood when the great thing he needed in life was sympathy. He was having a bad morning. It was therefore an unpleasant shock to have the white-moustached gentleman turn on him in a blaze of anger and exclaim :—

" Who the devil are you ? What the devil do you mean, letting your damned horse and trap rush about the country ? My God ! you've buckled both our front wheels, and I've a most important appointment in forty minutes in Hornborough."

" Where's my horse ? " wailed Mr. Bean. " I got out of the trap for a moment, and he bolted."

" What the devil did you get out of the trap for ? " roared the stentorian individual. The younger man grinned and said, casually :—

" Your horse is all right, old boy. He's trotting about in the meadow yonder, eating lotus-leaves."

Mr. Bean was a good runner, and he tore down the road yelling : " Stop him ! Stop him ! "

Mr. Bean climbed up the embankment and looked over ; and, sure enough, there was the horse, two hundred yards down the meadow, nibbling grass in the intervals of staring nervously around. He did not appear damaged at all, but the left shaft of the dog-cart was snapped at the base and the wheel badly twisted. Mr. Bean, however, was not allowed to devote too much attention to his own troubles. The elder man, whom he heard the other address as " General," ordered him down in such a commanding way that he had not the power to disobey.

" Now, my man, listen to me," roared the parade-ground voice. " How far is it to Hornborough ? "

" Nine miles," replied Mr. Bean, almost involuntarily adding " sir."

" God ! " said the General. " And where is the nearest place we can get a car ? "

" There isn't a garage nearer than Hornborough that I know of."

" Isn't there anyone in this God-forsaken part of the country who has got a car ? "

" Only Sir Samuel Lemby, and I know he's motored up to town to-day."

" God ! " repeated the General, and, turning to the younger man, he said : " What the devil are we going to do, my lord ? "

It occurred to Mr. Bean that the younger man, addressed as " my lord," was vaguely amused. He scratched his chin and said :—

" It looks like a wash-out, unless we walk, General."

" Walk ! Nine miles in forty minutes ! "

" Perhaps we could hire bicycles."

" Bicycles ! "

The General's face was a study in stupefied outrage. He turned to Mr. Bean and exclaimed : " Are there no traps about here ! "

" Plenty, sir," answered Mr. Bean, who by this time had completely succumbed to the overwhelming atmosphere of a general and a lord. " But no trap could do nine miles in forty minutes."

" But what the devil are we to do ? The Minister can't wait. The train won't wait. The House sits at two."

Mr. Bean was enormously impressed. He felt personally responsible for some mysterious national disaster. He said, weakly : " I don't know, sir. It's very awkward."

Then a bright inspiration occurred to him. " A race-horse could do it. Sir Samuel Lemby has race-horses, but he's away, and it's not likely the head-groom would lend any out for such a purpose."

The eyes of the General started out of his head.

" He wouldn't, wouldn't he ? How far is it to this Lemby's ? "

" There's the house, just up there, sir. Five minutes' walk."

V.

THE General appeared to be calculating savagely. At last he turned to the younger man and said :—

" Gevennah, it's our only chance. You could do this. You rode in the Grand

National. What you don't know about horses isn't worth knowing. For God's sake run up the hill. Cajole, bribe, steal—do anything to get the horse. Five minutes, say another five minutes arguing—half an hour to do nine miles. Perhaps you can get across country, save a bit, eh? There's just a chance. The train goes at twelve-thirty-two. Oxted is bound to catch it."

The young man's face lighted up. A queer smile twisted his mouth.

"All right," he said. "I'll have a shot. Give me the report."

"Here it is. I'll follow you up the hill as fast as I can move, in case they want more persuading."

Mr. Bean was left alone with the useless car and the broken dog-cart. He saw the younger man sprinting up the hill like a professional runner, and the elder chasing after him like some valetudinarian crank trying to keep his fat down.

As luck would have it, the younger man came slap on the head-groom and a subordinate leading two silk-coated mares out of the paddock for a canter. He approached the head-groom and smiled.

"My friend," he said, "I'm going to ask you to break all the Ten Commandments in one fell swoop. I am Lord Gevennah, a lover of horseflesh and metaphysics. The gentleman you observe coming up the hill is not training for the Marathon. He is General Boyd-Boyd, of the War Office Intelligence Staff. You may suggest that War Office and intelligence are a contradiction in terms, but we have not time to argue the matter. The point is, Sir Samuel is a very old friend of the General's and we are convinced that he would come to our rescue in the circumstances."

The head-groom leant forward and said: "Excuse me, sir, but would you mind telling me what you're talking about?"

"A very reasonable request. Farther down the hill, at the cross-roads, you may also observe a car jammed against the embankment. Both the front wheels are buckled. It is essential that we deliver a report—this report, my friend—to Sir Alfred Oxted, the Minister. He is catching the twelve-thirty-two train at Hornborough for London. The report affects the whole aspect of the argument affecting a Bill that is being discussed in the House this afternoon."

"What is it you want me to do, sir?"

"I want the loan of that beautiful roan mare which for the moment your figure so gracefully adorns, for the purpose of riding to Hornborough."

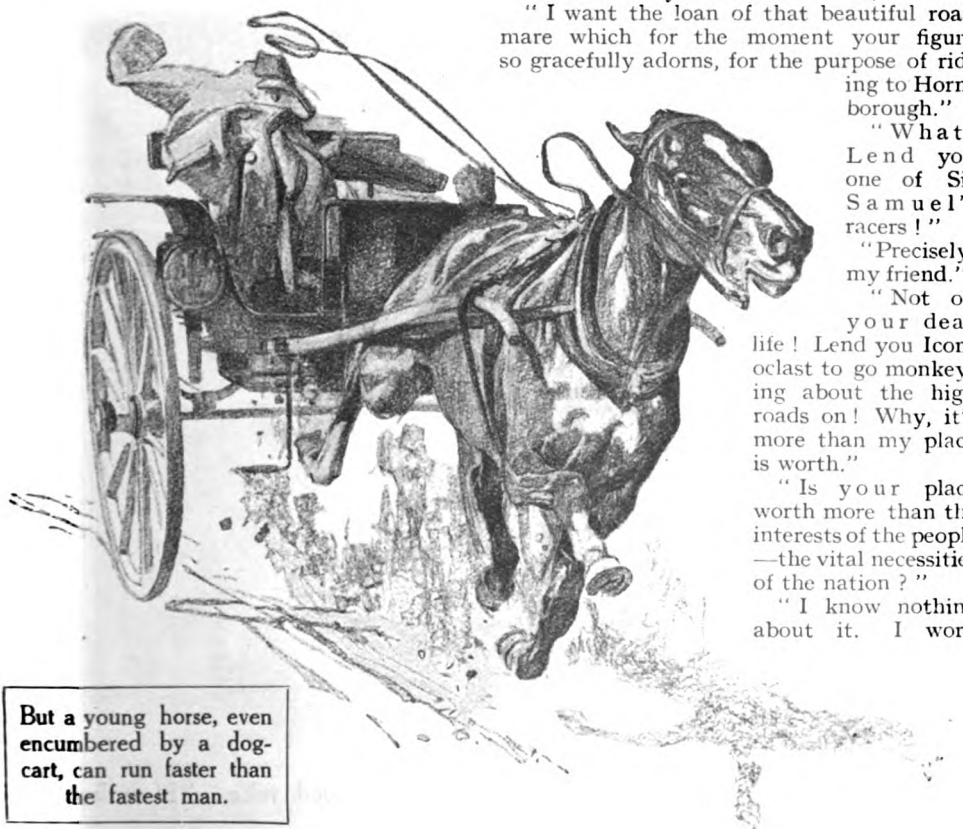
"What! Lend you one of Sir Samuel's racers!"

"Precisely, my friend."

"Not on your dear life! Lend you Iconoclast to go monkeying about the high roads on! Why, it's more than my place is worth."

"Is your place worth more than the interests of the people—the vital necessities of the nation?"

"I know nothing about it. I work



But a young horse, even encumbered by a dog-cart, can run faster than the fastest man.

for Sir Samuel Lemby. If you get his permission——"

"We have his permission—morally. He is one of the General's oldest friends."

"I've only got your word for it. Sir Samuel paid four thousand seven hundred and fifty for this mare. It can't be done."

"Come! this is quibbling; time is precious. The General said we should waste five minutes arguing. But if you will kindly dismount, I shall still have half an hour to get to Hornborough. I promise to bring the mare back safely."

"It can't be done, my son. For all I know the whole thing may be a cock-and-bull story."

"Ah! here comes the General. General, I'm afraid our friend demands security."

"Well, for God's sake give it to him. What the devil does he think we are?"

"Produce everything you've got, General. Pocket-book, money, despatches. I will do the same."

The head-groom beheld wallets of notes being produced, and he became frankly interested. In the end he accepted a bribe of two hundred and twenty-five pounds in cash for the loan of Iconoclast for one hour.

"It's an awful risk," he said, dismally, as he dismounted.

"If you do not take risks you will never arrive," replied the young man, leaping into the saddle. "Without taking risks great battles would not have been won, colonies founded, discoveries made. Iconoclast! an excellent name! Come, old friend! Iconoclast, breaker of idols, shatterer of illusions, trusted enemy to false prophets! Come!"

He pressed the mare's flanks gently with his knees, and she responded.

"Only twenty-nine minutes!" roared the General.

The young man turned a laughing face and waved his hand. His progress was visible to the anxious General's eye for nearly half a mile. The narrow road flanked a sixty-acre field and led into a bridle-path through a chain of little coppices. By taking

"Now, my man, listen to me," roared the parade-ground voice. "How far is it to Hornborough?"

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this bridle-path, the head-groom had explained that he would save a mile or two, as well as the horse's feet. The last they saw of him, he appeared to be leaning over, whispering in the mare's ear. Iconoclast was travelling like the wind.

It was certainly a very beautiful ride. The bridle-path, which once had been a Roman road, ran for nearly six miles in almost a dead straight line. The ground was gently undulating. Woods flashed by, and open spaces, commons with sparse trees, sandy cuttings with gorse and furze projecting at tantalizing angles, stretches of blue distance with cattle grazing, sleepy rivers. On, on, raced this famous offspring of Babylon and Happy Days (you shall read of her in Borwell's "History of the Turf").

The young man's face was alight with pleasure. Occasionally he slackened the mare's speed to glance at his wrist-watch. When the road was reached there were three miles to go, and twelve minutes to accomplish it. Iconoclast had justified her good name.

"Steady now, old girl, steady! We're reaching the stormy outposts of Christian gentlemen."

A sign-post pointed eastward to Hornborough. Fortunately the road was still what is known as a secondary road. A few cars flashed by, their drivers a little nervous of this bolting apparition of man and beast. Hay-carts lumbering leisurely out of fields were the serious source of danger, men on bicycles, market carts, all the slow-moving things.

Twelve minutes, eleven minutes, ten—the road sloping upwards violently to the headland that looks down on the Horn valley.

Nine minutes, eight and a half, eight—the summit reached. Down below, the sleepy

valley, almost impervious to the thrusts of time. Thus it must have looked in Boadicea's time. A few more hamlets, a few more cultivated fields.

"Whoa up, old girl!"

The signboard said one and a quarter miles to Hornborough Station. One mile and a quarter, and eight minutes to go! His faith! a worthy beast, this Iconoclast! One mile and a quarter, and all the way a gentle slope downward. If ever there was a pleasant sporting prospect, here was one. To travel at the rate so far maintained would bring horse and rider to their destination with some minutes to spare. Away on the horizon appeared tiny white balls of smoke, like little lumps of cotton-wool being shot out of a toy gun. It was the train. He again consulted his wrist-watch and estimated the distance. "It's four minutes late!" he exclaimed, a shade of disappointment in his voice. It would appear, in any case, not an occasion to tarry. One mile and a quarter, and twelve minutes to go. But, curiously enough, the young man seemed in no hurry. He tethered the mare to a gate, on the top bar of which he perched himself, and lit a cigarette.

"A glorious ride, Iconoclast, old friend!" he said, stroking the mare's nozzle. He appeared to be making a careful calculation, his eyes wandering from the little blobs of cotton-wool to his watch. After some minutes he flung his cigarette away, and again took to the saddle. The last mile and a quarter was done at express speed, but certainly not at the greatest speed of which the mare was capable. The rider seemed a little agitated by some meticulous calculation. Some of the road was covered in whirlwind fashion, but there were unaccountable slackenings and halts. When the little market town of Hornborough was reached, the blobs of cotton-wool arrived simultaneously. There was a furious ride along the broad High Street, terrifying the owners of booths and stalls. Shopkeepers ran to their doors, women clutched their children, and dogs barked. But horse and rider swung round the corner into Church Street, dashed across Ponder's Green, up the slope into the station-yard, and arrived *just as the train went out!* The whole town must have observed that dramatic ride and commented on it. A young man, on one of Sir Samuel's race-horses—some said it was Iconoclast herself—racing to the station to catch the London train—why?

VI.

HE flung the reins to an outside porter, and dashed into the station and on to the platform.

"The train has just gone, sir," exclaimed the ticket-collector, grinning. It may be observed, at this juncture, that there is a type of individual who loves to impart information of this kind. He loves to tell you you have just missed your train, or that you are in the wrong train, or that there isn't another one for four hours. His supreme idea of joy is to be able to tell you that you have just missed your last train. It isn't nice.

On this occasion our hero—for so he surely must be—merely muttered the formal exclamations of disappointment, and then went back and remounted his steed, after flinging the improvised groom a purse of gold. (No, if we remember rightly, it was a shilling.) Anyway, he galloped back through the town for all the world to see.

Instead, however, of returning the way he had come, he bore off to the west and, after ten minutes' ride, cantered up the chestnut avenue that led to a Georgian house. In the circular drive in front of the entrance-hall he espied a butler taking a parrot in a cage out for an airing. He called out:—

"Hi, Fareweather, can you hold my mare for five minutes? I can't stop. Is Miss Alice in?"

"Yes, my lord. With pleasure, my lord. She's in the Dutch garden, watering the gentians."

Ah! watering the gentians! How like Alice! The Dutch garden was excellent. It had the added charm of being sunk.

The girl looked up at him with that dreamy, does-anything-else-exist-but-thou-and-I expression, and he crushed her in his arms. These preliminaries being concluded, she said:—

"Well?"

And appropriately enough he answered:—

"'There's a destiny which shapes our ends, rough-hew them how we will.'"

"You look as though you had just invented a new religion."

"And so I have, but I haven't had time to patent it. This afternoon the Government will fall, and it will be my work. Religion and opportunity are old bedfellows."

"Tell me."

"You know the storm that has raged round the Subsidies Bill. It has been working to a crisis. The Government have staked their all on squashing the amendment which our people are putting this afternoon. A delicate subject like this is largely a question of figures. Figures can be impressive, but a clever man can use them either way. That is what they've been doing. They have the control end of statistics, and statistics can be wangled. Over the week-end I was at Clive Hall. I was supposed to be there for polo, but I found myself in a

mare's nest of conspirators and wanglers. Brigadiers and carpet-salesmen, they've been all over the country, drawing up a report."

"Is it a false report, Mervyn?"

"Yes, and no. A report can be false not so much by what it says as by what it leaves out. See? This was a devilish, wanglish, naughty, spiteful report, and they were going to spring it on the House this afternoon, to crush our people's amendment. I didn't show my hand. I'm only a polo-player. I was full of sympathy. A chutney-biting brigadier named Boyd-Boyd fixed an appointment on the 'phone with Oxted, at Hornborough Station, for the twelve-thirty-two. He was to deliver the goods. I offered to accompany him, making the excuse that I had to go to town. Cyril lent us his car. We had got as far as some God-forsaken spot in the Weynesham Valley. I was desperate. I couldn't make up my mind whether to dot the old chap over the head and bolt or whether to pinch the report and let it blow away, when fate supervened."

"What happened?"

"A horse in a dog-cart bolted. The fool of a man had got out, for some reason or other. In trying to avoid it, our chauffeur ran into a bank, and buckled both the front wheels. We had nine miles to go, and there wasn't such a thing as a car in the neighbourhood. The old Purple Patch nearly went off his nut. Then some magician produced a race-horse."

"A race-horse!"

"Wasn't it sweet? I jumped at the idea. I knew that it would be up to me to do the flying handicap stuff, and with the report once in my possession all would be well. I rode hell-for-leather, and missed the train gracefully by a minute."

"But what will you do with the report?"

"Give it back. It doesn't matter. It will be too late. Figures like that are only useful when used at the right moment. To-morrow the Government will be down, and no one will care a rap about their blinking old report."

"Oh, dear! I'm glad I don't have anything to do with politics."

"The train has just gone, sir," exclaimed the ticket-collector, grinning.

"You do. You are politics. You are what we fight for, and lie for, and wangle for. You are religion. You are beauty. Haven't you heard the saying: *Homo solus aut deus aut demon?* You are the rose in the heart of the world. You——"

"Talking about roses, Mervyn, how do you like my gentians?"

"There you go! You always spoil my best periods. Darling, one kiss and I must away."

"Whither, O Lord?"

"To take the mare back, and face the fury of my bonny brigadier."

"He *will* be angry!"

"What does it matter? Did you ever know a brigadier who mattered? When the big story is told, you'll find he's about as important as a—as a—piece of bacon-rind!"

VII.

"YOU didn't ought to have talked to the boy like that," said Mrs. Egger, as she poured out Mr. Egger's glass of stout at supper-time. "It's set the boy on thinking; and when a boy like Tom starts thinking it's—it's—bad for his health."

"I like that," replied William, blowing the froth off the stout. "Why, it was you put me up to it. Didn't you say——?"

"I told yer to give him a good scolding. It would have been better if you'd boxed his ears. Instead of all this talk."

"What talk?"

"Saying one thing leads to another, and so on."

"Well, isn't it true?"

"In a kind of way it's true. In a kind of way it's silly. Anyway, it sets him on thinking. I saw him in the shop this afternoon staring at them cooking-pears. I know he was thinking about what you said. How if he took apples to-day, he might take pears to-morrow. It put the notion there, like. He'd never have thought of it. And this evenin' he comes up to me and says, 'Mum, dad said one thing leads to another,' and I says, 'Yes, Tom?' and he says, 'Mum, what was the first thing from which the other things come?' Did you ever hear such notions? Pass the pickles, dear."

THE INCA'S TREASURE

by

F. BRITTEN AUSTIN

ILLUSTRATED BY S. SEYMOUR LUCAS

THE little crowd in the corner of the *Strathmoran's* smoking-room had been swapping tall stories over their whiskies-and-sodas. One of them turned to a grey-haired, sailor-like man who had been listening in silence, absorbed in the enjoyment of his cigar.

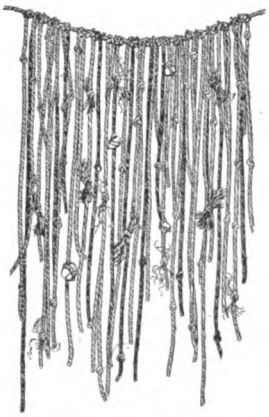
"Now then, Walters. It's your turn for a yarn. What with raising ships and one thing and another, you must have had some curious experiences, above and under water."

"I have," he admitted. "But my most curious experience had nothing to do with a ship. When the steward has given us another peg all round, I'll tell you the story. One of you chaps reminded me of it just now with that yarn about prospecting in the Andes." He touched the bell and paused while the steward fulfilled the order.

"This story is also about Peru," he began, setting down his glass. "It happened twenty years ago. I had been sent on my first job as superintendent to salve the bullion out of a ship sunk in a collision just outside Callao—just off the island of San Lorenzo, to be exact. I had an assistant with me, a young fellow named Tremayne."

"Alec Tremayne?" queried one of his audience. "Was he salving in New Guinea some ten years back?"

"That's the man," said Walters. "Did he ever show you that little parlour-trick of his?"



A Peruvian Quipu.

"Once," said the man who knew Tremayne. "But he didn't really like doing it. Personally, I thought it was uncanny."

"What was it?" asked one of the others.

"If you gave him any article belonging to someone else—a souvenir from your best girl or a letter from someone he had never heard of, anything you like—he would put it against his forehead for a moment or two, and then tell you all about that person in detail. He couldn't tell you how he did it. Said he just knew somehow—supposed it was the Cornish blood in him."

"Psychometry," remarked one of his interested listeners, who prided himself upon encyclopædic knowledge.

"That's the word," agreed Walters. "Though I don't know that it explains anything. I took the trouble to read the subject up later on. The theory is that events or emotions in some way impress themselves upon inanimate objects, like a gramophone record, and that people of a particular type can pick up the vibrations and reconstruct the cause just as your mind reconstructs an orchestra or a familiar voice from the vibrations set up by the needle passing over the gramophone disc. It is the theory which is supposed to explain haunted houses. It is incomprehensible, anyway, when you try to think it out. But Tremayne could certainly tell you

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astonishing things of which he could not possibly have had any personal knowledge."

"He was a good chap," said the man who knew him in New Guinea.

"First-rate," said Walters, and continued :—

WE were great pals. Salving that bullion was a long job, and we had every opportunity of knowing each other intimately. We got to the end of it at last, however, and packed up our diving apparatus and went into Lima to await instructions from headquarters. Our chief friend there was a Peruvian gentleman whom everybody called Don José—his surname doesn't matter. He was a wealthy man about forty years of age, highly cultured, with the perfect manners of the polished cosmopolitan. He had represented the Peruvian Government in several European capitals and he spoke English like a native. There are few pure-blooded Spaniards in Peru, of course, and most of the inhabitants show the Indian strain unmistakably. But there was altogether an uncommon distinction about Don José, and we could well believe that he was, as people said, a descendant of the ancient Incas.

He invited us to dinner that night we had finished with the wreck. It is curious how rarely one has any foreboding of the most startling events in life. Not even Tremayne, for all his uncanny faculties, had any presentiment that we were on the threshold of an amazing adventure. We were merely cheerful with the expectation of a good dinner. We had it. Don José was a bachelor who cultivated the art of fine living to an exquisite nicety. The dining-room was like a museum, with its carved Spanish chests, its wonderful antique silver plate, and its age-blackened ancestral portraits. We ate our perfectly-thought-out dinner in an atmosphere charged with the romance of those old Conquistadores. It was on the female side, of course, that Don José was descended from the Incas. His male progenitor was a companion of Pizarro's. He told us many anecdotes of those far-off times during dinner, pointed to pieces of armour on the walls which had been worn by one or another of those famous captains.

We sat long over our wine in the interest of our host's fascinating conversation—Tremayne with his dreamy, Celtic-blue eyes fastened upon him, myself listening and talking also, but with my eyes continually attracted by a curious ring upon our host's finger. The impulse to ask him what it was at last became too strong to be resisted.

Don José smiled as he slipped it over the knuckle.

"That," he said, passing it to me, "is a ring worn by the ancient Incas."

I turned it over in my hand. It was very heavy, of pure yellow gold, moulded with an angular geometrical pattern right round it.

I passed it to Tremayne.

"You ought to try your little parlour-trick with that, Alec," I said, half jokingly, half serious.

"Shut up, Jimmy," he said, irritably, "and don't suggest stupid things."

Knowing how he hated doing that trick, I could not well resent the snub. Don José was smiling at us.

"And what is Señor Tremayne's little parlour-trick, may I ask?" he queried. I had to tell him. "It is a thing that I have read of," he said, "but have never seen. May I beg of Señor Tremayne to show me his very curious faculty?"

Tremayne, of course, could not decently refuse. He made light of his powers, said he could not guarantee anything at all, but consented to try. He sat for a moment or two with the ring pressed against his forehead, his eyes closed.

"I begin to see something," he said, at last, while we sat and watched him, breathlessly. He paused, and then spoke slowly as though concentrating for precise vision. "I see a man—curiously dressed. Round his head is a sort of red ribbon. It is twisted round two or three times, and there is a red fringe which comes down over his eyes. He wears a red plume also and a rich cloak of white and gold. There are people about him—they weep bitterly, with despairing gestures. There are other people—different. They are Europeans, in helmets and breast-plates—swords and halberds—the steel seems to frighten me—there is a stake with faggots round it—ah!" He uttered a peculiar cry, dropped the ring, and clutched with his fingers at his throat. Then his eyes opened. He looked at us and shuddered. "It is strange," he said. "It felt as though I were being strangled."

Don José was serious, intensely interested.

"Very strange," he agreed. "That ring belonged to Atahualpa, the last independent Inca of Peru. The Spaniards allowed him the favour of being strangled before he was burned. You described his dress exactly." He smiled at Tremayne, who handed him back the ring. "You certainly saw something which really happened, Señor Tremayne."

Tremayne shrugged his shoulders.

"I may have read about it somewhere, Don José—though I don't remember it."

"You may, of course," agreed Don José. "Will you try again—with something of which you cannot possibly know anything?"

He felt inside his soft shirt-front, brought out a little gold crucifix he had evidently worn suspended from his neck, passed it to Tremayne. Once his initial reluctance was overcome, Tremayne was as interested as anyone else, and he put the crucifix to his forehead as he had done the ring. His eyes closed and he sat in an attitude of concentration.

"You really wish me to tell you what I see, Don José?" he said, after an interval.

"Yes," said Don José, in a peculiar tone. The hand which held his cigar was trembling.

But Tremayne opened his eyes.

"Don José," he said, "there are tragedies too sacred for strangers to know of. I would rather forget what I saw. But to prove that I did see something I will remind you of your vow when you received this crucifix and repeat a name—*Micaela.*"

"It is enough," said Don José, hoarsely, reaching out his hand for the crucifix.

Tremayne looked our host in the eyes and his manner was unusually solemn. "Don José," he said, as he handed it back, "I had a warning in that vision—a message for you. Whatever the temptation, never part with that pledge or talisman, or whatever it is."

"It is both," said Don José, "and the warning is unnecessary. For nothing in the world would I part with it. Thank you, Señor Tremayne." He was strangely moved under his smilingly controlled manner.

HE filled our glasses and we all three sat in silence for a moment or two, each occupied with his own thoughts. At length Don José rose from the table and went to one of the Spanish chests against the wall. He opened one of the little carved drawers behind the opened doors of the front and returned to us with the object he had fetched. It was a long piece of string, to which other pieces of string were fastened perpendicularly. These hanging pieces of string were of different colours. They were knotted and looped at intervals along their lengths, and into some of the knots were twisted bits of hair and grass and here and there bits of stone. It was obviously extremely ancient. Don José handled it with care as he laid it on the table before us.

"What is it?" I asked.

"I will tell you presently," he replied. "Señor Tremayne, will you try your powers with this?" There was a curious repressed excitement in his manner which puzzled me.

Tremayne made no objection.

"This is no ordinary piece of string," he said, after a moment. "It is full of information. It is like a book—in a language I can't read."

"Try!" said Don José, watching him intently.

"I can't read it. But I see pictures. I see gold—a gold statue—heaps on heaps of gold in a dark place—this has something to do with gold. One minute—I must begin at the beginning." He shifted the string across his forehead. "I see a city—it is among mountains, high mountains. The city is built of stone, of darkish coloured stone in huge blocks—they are just laid neatly on one another, there is no cement. There is a big hill behind it, very steep, with an immense castle on it, in three circles, built also of those great blocks of stone—it is as if someone were whispering its name—I can't quite catch it—Saxa—Saxa——"

"Sacsahuaman," suggested Don José.

"Sacsahuaman! That's it!" Tremayne moved the string across his forehead. "A journey—through the mountains—deep ravines—such a dangerous-looking bridge! just rope—night—more journey—on and on and on—two, three nights I sleep—I can't tell you all of it—a river—there are many rivers, but I stop at this one—I go into it, I wade against the stream"—he was still moving the string across his forehead as he spoke—"someone is whispering to me to—to hold my breath—oh!—I am right under the water—I go on walking, groping, still under the water—there is a dark cavern—I go into it—I mount upwards—ah!" He screamed hideously. "Ah! the jaws!—the jaws!" His head went down, face forward, on the table with a crash that sent a wine-glass to smash upon the floor, and the string fell from his nerveless fingers.

He seemed to be in a dead faint and we had considerable difficulty in bringing him round. I was relieved when at last I saw him sit up and drink a glass of Don José's best brandy, and smile at us, his old self again. He pushed the string away from him with a shudder. "There's something peculiar about that bit of old junk," he said. "I can't remember now what I saw—but it was horrible—like a nightmare."

"What is it, Don José?" I asked, picking it up and fingering it.

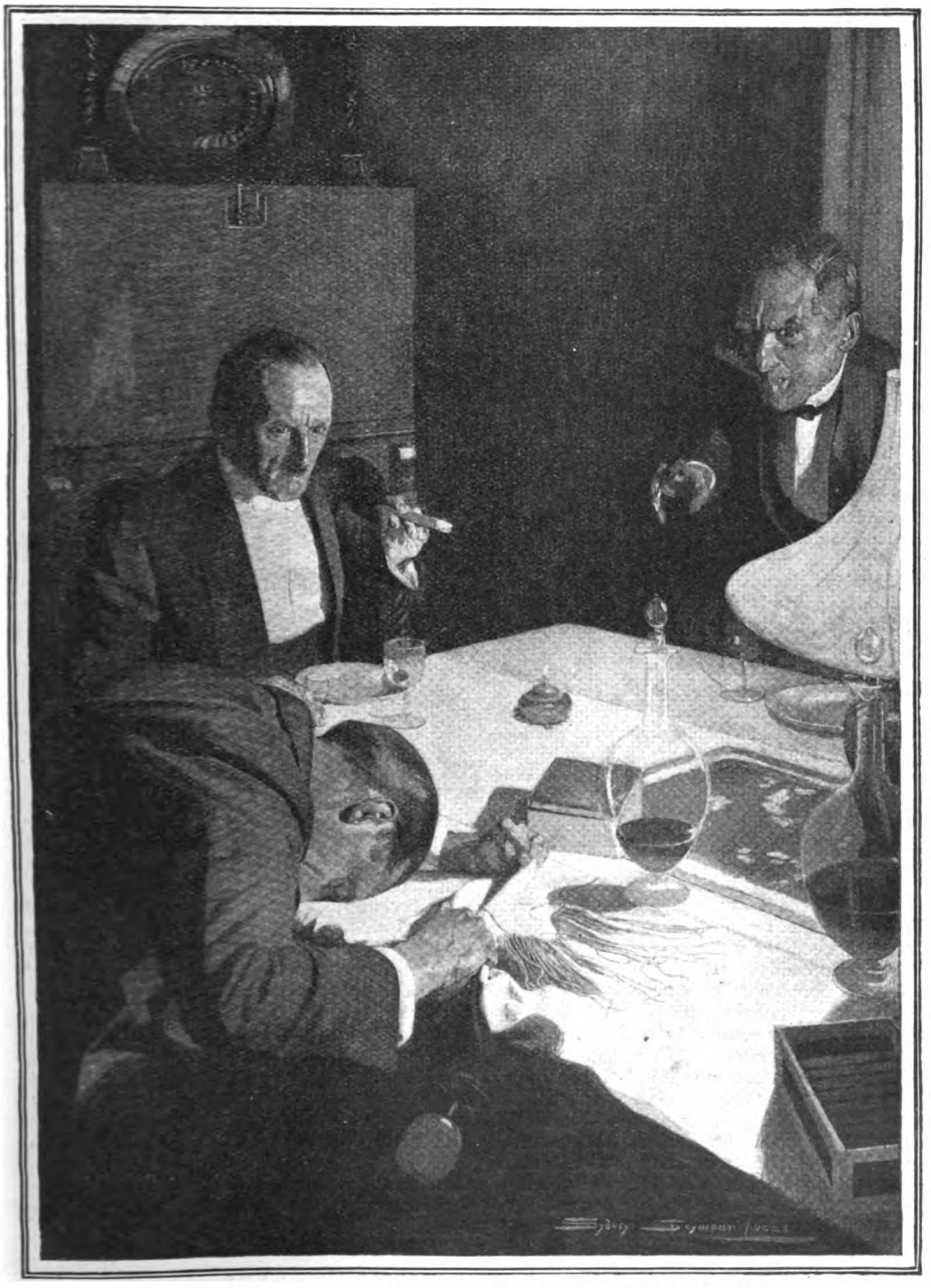
"I will tell you," said our host, "but before doing so I will make sure that we are alone." He went to the doors and out into the *patio*, satisfied himself that there were no eavesdroppers. Then he returned to the table, filled us each a glass of his priceless cognac. "Gentlemen, to our miraculous good fortune," he said, raising his glass.

We drank the toast, rather bewildered.

"BUT what is it?" I asked again.

He picked up the dirty-looking knotted strings.

"This, gentlemen, is a *quipu*. The ancient Peruvians had no knowledge of the



His head went down on the table with a crash, and the string fell from his nerveless fingers.

art of writing. This was their only means of keeping a record. With such pieces of string as this, the orders of the Inca were transmitted from end to end of his empire, and with other pieces the history of the nation was preserved. There was a high official, the *Quipu Camayu*, whose duty it was to keep them in sacred custody. Many of these *quipus* still remain. But unfortunately the secret of reading them is lost. For more than a hundred years no one has been able even to guess at their meaning."

"But what was that gold statue that Tremayne talked about?" I remarked.

"I am coming to that. You are certainly aware that the Spanish Conquistadores discovered immense treasures of gold in the country. You may also know that they did not discover them all. The ancient Peruvians hid all they could. To this day people have been digging them out. Searching for buried treasure is almost a national mania in this country. There are men—*tapadas*, they are called—who do nothing else. I am somewhat of a *tapada* myself." He smiled again. "But the chief treasure of all—the treasure of the Temple of the Sun—has never been discovered. It was hidden with the gold-plated mummy of Huayna Capac, the greatest of the Incas."

"Is it known to exist?" said I.

"It is certainly known to exist," replied Don José, "but although the Spaniards tortured ruthlessly every person they imagined might know the secret, and though for nearly four hundred years every likely place has been thoroughly searched, not a trace of it has ever been found."

"Perhaps one of the old Spaniards got away with it and kept it to himself," surmised Tremayne.

Don José shook his head.

"No. There is evidence to the contrary. In 1815 a great revolt against the Spaniards was organized by a cacique named Pumacagua. Pumacagua needed money for this patriotic purpose. In some way he came into communication with the guardian of the secret, a poor peasant but the descendant of an ancient priest. After making him swear that he would not take more money than he needed for the rebellion, the guardian of the secret took Pumacagua a many days' journey blindfold through the mountains. At last they came to a river, and all that Pumacagua knew was that he waded with water above his head until he came to a cavern where was an incredible profusion of golden vases and objects of all sorts, together with the golden mummy of Huayna Capac. He took enough for his purpose, and returned, still blindfolded, the way he had come."

"How extraordinary!" exclaimed Tremayne. "I vividly felt myself wading under water."

"Pumacagua was my ancestor," Don José continued. "From his deathbed that last guardian of the secret sent his grandson this *quipu*." He picked it up, looked at its enigmatic knots and loops. "It describes the way to the treasure—if only it could be read."

"Good Lord!" commented Tremayne. "If only it could be read!"

"It *can* be read, Señor Tremayne," said Don José, fixing him with his brilliant eyes. "You can read it, not perhaps as an ancient Peruvian would read it, but well enough for all practical purposes. You visualize evidently the itinerary on which certainly the man who knotted that *quipu* was then concentrating his thoughts. That first place you described, the city, the starting-point—I recognized it. It is Cuzco, the ancient capital of the Incas. Don't you think that if we started from there and you had this *quipu* with you, you could describe the journey stage by stage so that I, who know the country well, could recognize it?"

"I might," admitted Tremayne. He looked round at us suddenly, as though testing the credibility of this fantastic thing. We were all three trembling with excitement. "Good Lord," he said, "I can't believe I'm awake!"

"There is more than wealth enough for the three of us," went on Don José. In his eyes glittered the lust for gold. "We should all be millionaires many times over. Will you try?"

"Of course I will," said Tremayne. "But I can't be sure that I can read the thing again. It doesn't follow that I can do it just when I want to."

"Try now," said Don José, passing him the *quipu*.

We watched him with a breathless suspense as he put his powers to that test of repetition at will which meant so much to us.

For a long moment he did not speak. Then once more, slowly but clearly, he recapitulated that several days' journey through the mountains. He did not lose himself in so deep a trance this second time, and when he came to the river he opened his eyes and put down the *quipu* with an abrupt gesture.

"We'll leave out that under-water bit for the present," he said. "There's a nasty feel about it. Could you make anything of the rest?"

"All that mountain country is so much alike that I cannot map out the way from your general description," said Don José. "But on the spot, with the *quipu* and your powers to help us, it should be easy to identify the trail."

"I can certainly do it at will. I am confident of it," said Tremayne. "Walters—are you game? I ought to warn both of you that there's some danger in it that I can't quite make out. I feel it strongly."

"There's danger also of dying of starvation in our old age," said I. "I'm your man. But since you two are good enough to count me in, I should like to make my little contribution. It occurs to me that even if we should happen to hit on that river, there's going to be some difficulty in finding the submerged entrance to the cave. It's one thing to be led to it; it's another to grope about, holding your breath, under water. I suggest we take the lead off some diving suits, and fit short air-pipes on to floats. Then we can explore as much as we like, at our ease."

Don José turned to me. "Señor Walters," he said, "you may think me superstitious, but it is Destiny that has brought us three together. We three form perhaps the only combination that could unlock the secret. Your diving-suits solve the last difficulty." He filled our glasses again. "Gentlemen, there are indeed dangers, as Señor Tremayne suggests. I, who am of Inca blood, can vaguely guess at them. But I for one here vow that nothing shall turn me back. Destiny!" he cried, in Spanish, raising his glass, "I embrace thee!" He drank, and dashed his glass sacramentally to pieces on the floor. So might have done his other ancestor, the Conquistador.

WITHIN ten days, equipped for our expedition, we were in Cuzco. Dominating it was the precipitous hill of Sacsahuaman, crowned with the triple and colossal walls of their ancient fortress. All around were lofty mountains gashed with deep ravines.

There, behind locked doors in an upper room of the dirty inn where we lodged, Tremayne once more psychometrized the *quipu*, whilst we watched him with tense and breathless interest. His eyes closed, that length of enigmatic strings passed slowly across his forehead, deliberately and vividly he described a path up a ravine which Don José whispered to me was that of the Huatanay, into the wilderness of the mountains. As he visualized the route, I wrote it down in a notebook. Don José asserted confidently that he recognized every step of the way. About the beginning there was no doubt whatever. We could see from our window the features that Tremayne described.

The next morning we set off at dawn. Naturally, we took no servants with us, and ourselves drove the three mules loaded with our diving-suits and other equipment. Our plan was to get the gold out of the river cavern and hide it in some more accessible place, fetching it thence by successive journeys.

All that day we journeyed, and it was uncanny to recognize, at each new prospect in that wild country, the exactness with which Tremayne's clairvoyant faculty had pictured the route. We went on in absolute confidence. That night we camped, many thousands of feet up, on a stretch of thin turf scattered with huge boulders, precisely as Tremayne had seen it.

The next morning Tremayne, with the *quipu* to his brow, visualized for us the next stage of our journey, from dawn to nightfall, and once more, among mighty snow mountains, with frightful chasms now on one hand, now on the other, over loose moraines and across torrents, we found the trail, hour after hour, precisely as Tremayne had described. Save for the physical difficulties of the path, it was almost absurdly easy. Tremayne and I were in high spirits.

Don José, in contrast to our happy mood, seemed to be obsessed by some apprehension he did not confide to us. We joked him on his fears.

His dark eyes rested upon us with a peculiar expression of private knowledge. "We defy more powers than you know of," he said, enigmatically. "The old gods are perhaps not dead." It was the Inca strain in him, we thought, but we had to admit to ourselves that so far the old gods had guarded their treasure well.

That night and the next we camped amid the mountain summits, but the fourth day the trail led sharply downwards. This, according to Tremayne's vision, should have been the last day of our journey, and we were wild with excitement. Unfortunately, whether or not as a result of the great fatigues he had undergone, Tremayne's faculty had been weak that morning.

"We'll camp at midday," I said to him, "and then you can rest up a bit before you have another try. Don't lose confidence in yourself, whatever you do. We haven't come so far to be balked now."

But that was just what we had done. We camped at midday in a little savannah between dense forests clothing the lower slopes of a mountain spur. All around us were torrents foaming over rocky beds. We camped close to one that emerged from a sheer-cut ravine. This was as Tremayne had seen it in his last mental picture from the *quipu*, but we had long ago finally lost any sign of track. There was absolutely nothing to guide us, except Tremayne's divination of the way. And that now failed utterly. He rested and tried in vain—

rested still longer and again saw nothing—nothing whatever. His faculty seemed to have totally abandoned him. There were tears in his eyes as, after his fifth attempt, with the sun now gone down behind the mountain walls, he turned to us and said :—

" It's no good, boys. I can't see a thing. I've lost the gift, I'm afraid." He handed the *quipu* sadly back to Don José, who wore it, for precaution, on his body, fastened round his chest under his shirt in company with his golden crucifix.

" Nonsense," I said. " We'll camp here for the night and you'll be all right in the morning."

BUT he wasn't. We couldn't wait for breakfast before he tried. And then his mind was an absolute blank. We sat and stared at one another, absolutely paralyzed. Tremayne and I were depressed enough, but Don José looked ghastly, white and haggard. He had slept badly, he told us.

For three days we were stuck in that accursed spot. A hundred times Tremayne tried to psychometrize that *quipu*, and never did he see any more than you or I would have done. His faculty had completely deserted him. And all the time we were tortured by the knowledge that the treasure must be somewhere quite close to us—but whether it was a few yards or a few miles it was impossible to say. Without Tremayne's special powers to guide us, we might search till Doomsday.

I shall never forget that encampment, with the three mules browsing peacefully on the herbage, our packed-up diving-suits and other baggage piled near our cooking fire, and Don José pacing up and down, gnawing at his knuckles and muttering prayers to himself.

The lower shadows were beginning to darken on the afternoon of that third day when Tremayne, who had been dozing in a despairful reaction from his last effort, sat up suddenly.

" I think I can do it, boys ! " he cried. " I feel like it suddenly. Let me try ! "

Eagerly Don José produced the *quipu* and the pair of us sat on the ground watching Tremayne with thumping hearts as he put that last end of the string to his brow and closed his eyes.

" Yes ! " he cried. " I see something. Wait ! "

We waited, holding our breath.

" Yes," he repeated, with tense deliberation. " I see something. But it seems to be Cuzco again—there is Sacsahuaman. Ah, now I see clearly ! I see a temple—an immense temple high above a river—everything is gold—there are golden trees in the grounds, there is a double row of golden statues leading up to an immense golden sun. There is some ceremony on—I see a throng of people and priests busy in front of the altar. What is this coming ? Oh, it is the Inca with the red plume. He goes to the altar. He makes a sacrifice of some kind."

" Go on," said Don José. " What next ? "

" Nothing more," he answered. " I can't get beyond that sacrifice. I can only see that. Oh—and now that's gone," he added, in a tone of disappointment. " There's nothing—nothing at all. I can't see anything. It has all vanished again." He put down the *quipu*, looked at us miserably.

" What do you make of that, Don José ? " I asked, turning to him.

I was scared at his appearance. The blood seemed to have gone out of his face, his eyes stared as at some affrighting vision of the mind, his lips muttered something I could not at first catch. Then I distinguished the words, in Spanish, " I knew it—I knew it ! " He seemed altogether oblivious of us, in a private terror or anguish we could not guess at.

" What it is that you knew, Don José ? " I asked, irritably. Our nerves were on edge that afternoon.

He swung round to us.

" Señor Tremayne, you see nothing more ? "

Tremayne tried again.

" Nothing at all," he said, hopelessly.

" But he did see something," I urged. " What did that mean ? "

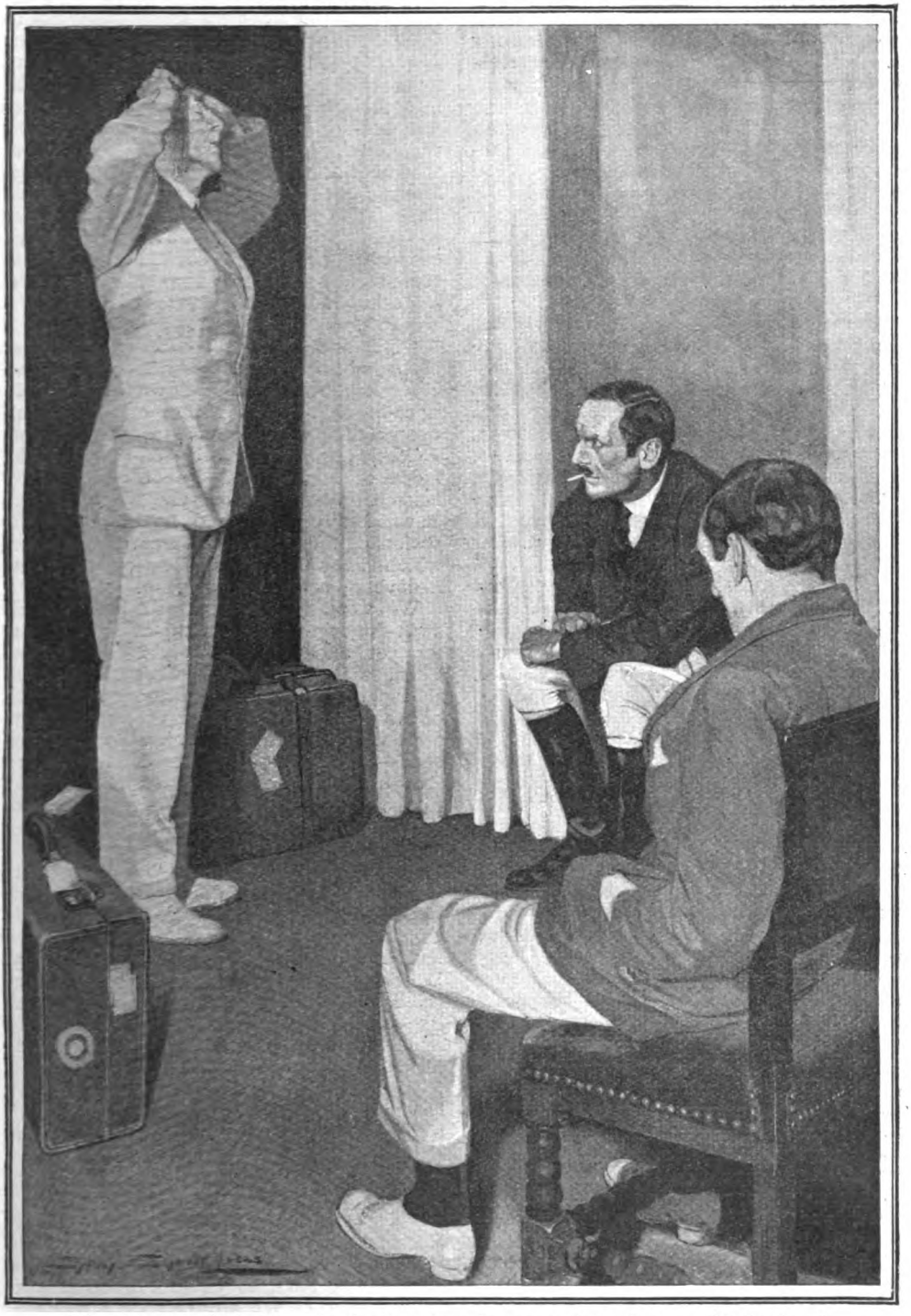
" He saw what I have dreamed for the last three nights," answered Don José, almost angrily. The man's manner was altogether peculiar. " He saw the sacrifice of the Incas in the Temple of the Sun at Cuzco. It means that if we are to go farther, I, the descendant of the Incas, must likewise sacrifice to our ancient god, must renounce——" He broke off with a wild gesture of despair.

It sounded fantastically absurd superstition to me—but there was something in that mountain solitude which inclined one to superstition.

" Well, sacrifice, then ! " I said, contemptuously. " What shall we do—kill a mule ? "

" No ! " he said, solemnly. " Only the sacrifice of what is dearest to him can be made by an Inca to his father the Sun."

This was to us a ridiculous position. Haunted by the thought of that treasure so tantalizingly near, we sat and watched him wrestling with temptation. I could not imagine what sacrifice was required of him. But evidently he had no doubt. Fascinated, we saw him open his shirt and unfasten some small, glittering object from his neck. He



His eyes closed, that length of enigmatic strings passed slowly across his forehead, deliberately and vividly he described the route.

held it in his hand, gazing at it with despairful fondness. It was the small gold crucifix he constantly wore. He stood there, staring at it, wild-eyed, muttering incomprehensible words. I saw sweat standing out upon his forehead. He turned to us.

"Gentlemen," he said, with a peculiar solemnity, "left to myself, I should renounce this adventure. But I brought you into it—I swore to you—my honour is involved." He walked quickly to the river bank, flung the crucifix into the torrent with a wild cry: "*Adios, Micaela! Adios!*"

Then once more he turned to Tremayne.

"Try now," he said, authoritatively.

Tremayne put the *quipu* to his forehead, closed his eyes. He uttered a sharp exclamation of amazement.

"Why—we are here!" he cried. "This is the place—I recognize it—the very spot. This is the river! We go down into it, wade up-stream, the water over our heads. It is dark—yes!" he finished, excitedly, "there is the cavern on the right!" He opened his eyes. "How extraordinary that we should have been at the very spot after all!"

"There is nothing extraordinary about it," pronounced Don José. "The sacrifice was necessary."

"Well," I said, cheerfully, "let's waste no more time about it. Come along, Alec, and help me get out those diving-suits."

Don José helped also, and gradually lost his gloomy melancholy in the contagion of our excitement. The thought of that immense hoard of gold so near at hand worked in us like a fever. In a very short time we stood equipped in the diving-suits, from which most of the lead had been removed, electric torches on our breasts, and holding in our hands thirty-foot coils of air-pipe attached to floats. We looked three weird figures from another world as we waddled clumsily down to the bank.

Just as we got to the stream, Tremayne tapped at my helmet. We put our heads in contact for speech.

"Supposing there's an obstruction?" he said. "What about the dynamite?"

We had brought with us some dynamite charges left over from those we had been using to break into the hold of the wreck. They were patent things, with long fuses fired by the spark from a pocket battery. With precaution, and lying down at a distance, you could explode them without coming to the surface.

"Good idea!" I shouted in answer, and we waddled back for them.

We cautiously made our way into at least twenty feet of water, and the current was so strong that we had to hold hands, the three of us, to make way against it.

We switched on our lights, for only an attenuated illumination came down to us from the bright crystalline roof of the water-surface, breaking in gleaming bubble-streams against the rocks that passed up out of sight into the air. The floats of our air-pipes followed us overhead. Hand in hand the three of us groped our way stumblingly over the uneven bottom, flashing our electric lamps into every cavity of the right-hand bank. Obviously we could not have far to go. The ancient Peruvians who had concealed the treasure could not have held their breath for much more than a minute, say a hundred and fifty yards of distance.

WE had perhaps covered half of that when I suddenly saw Tremayne wave his arm and bend down to the pebbly river-bottom. The light of our lamps fell upon a golden vase of curious, crude shape. Evidently it had been dropped by one of the hiders of the treasure. I shouted inside my helmet. We were on the right track! It was heavy yellow gold, but in our anticipation of the immensely greater wealth of which this was but an indication, we threw it down as not worth carrying.

We went on, flashing our lamps, with swift-darting fish swarming away from us, for yet another fifty yards of progress. Then, with one accord, we stopped. On the right was a dark cavern about the height of a man, and carved over the centre of its arch was a horribly grinning square-faced head—an ancient Peruvian demon, placed there probably to frighten away disturbers of the treasure. It had the reverse effect on us. It was the final proof. We pushed forward to the mouth of the cave.

It was so narrow that we had to enter in single file. We shut off our air-valves, for our floats were being dragged down behind us, and held our breaths. It was only for a matter of seconds. The bottom rose steeply. We clambered up, the roof of water reflecting the light of our lamps. In a moment it was like a low ceiling above our heads. In another we had emerged, opened our helmets for a breath of dank air.

For yet some yards ahead of us the cave continued as a narrow corridor, but, as our lamps lit up its damp walls, we could see at the end what seemed to be a golden statue in a widening of the cavern. About it were heaps of metal that glinted dully yellow.

With a joyous shout we pressed forward. We had scarcely taken two or three steps out of the water when, like a late echo, our shout came back to us in a dreadful roar. Was it echo? We stopped for a moment, in an apprehension we could not define. There was silence. We pushed on again.

We emerged into a vast lofty cavern, and

There in front of us was the gold-plated mummy of Huayna Capac, its twisted features seeming to regard us with a smile of ineffable irony.

such a sight as for a hundred years no man's eyes had looked on. There in front of us was the gold-plated mummy of Huayna Capac, its twisted features seeming to regard us with a smile of ineffable irony. Its impassive contemplation of our strange appearance—we looked a grotesque trio in our unhuman-headed diving-dresses—was oddly impressive. But we were not there as tourists. Tremayne and I shook off the eerie fascination of that gilded figure with the twisted smile, and looked about us. Heaped high to the remotest recesses of that huge cavern was an incredible profusion of golden vases, golden figures, golden trees, golden animals, all that fantastic variety of golden objects which I have since read about in the ancient Spanish chroniclers as being in the Temple of the Sun. The difficulty was to decide what to begin to take. We turned to consult with Don José. To our astonishment, he was kneeling before the mummy of Huayna Capac as though demanding pardon. He took from his finger the ring of the Incas and laid it at its feet with a gesture of profound abasement.

Before we had had time to speculate on the meaning of this superstitious performance, Tremayne grabbed my arm.

"What's that?" he ejaculated.

A peculiar sound filled the cavern—a rustling, slithering sort of sound as of something heavy that dragged itself. It was followed by a loud, dully metallic clashing whose origin we could not even guess at. There was an appalling reverberating roar. We swept our lamps round like searchlights in our alarm, saw three or four pairs of immensely long clashing jaws, armed with fearsome teeth, appear from the dark recesses behind the horribly smiling mummy. They were crocodiles of a sort, but bigger than any I have ever seen—prehistoric survivals, perhaps, in this inaccessible cavern. They slithered quickly towards us on their short legs. Tremayne and I dashed for the exit. Don José also saw them. He sprang to his feet, and then stood motionless, with no effort to escape. We shouted to him, but he did not move. Was he paralyzed by fear, or did he wait for them, superstitious as he was? The result was the same. Our last sight of him was with those monstrous saurians squirming over one another in competition for his body.

Our danger was imminent. In another moment they would be on us also. We should have no chance of escape in that narrow water-passage. Deep-sea diving is a profession that inculcates presence of mind. I pulled out a dynamite cartridge, fired the fuse, flung it among them. Then we dashed back to the water, flung ourselves in headlong, with barely time to close the windows of our helmets. We heard a dull roar behind us.

The next thing I knew was when I found myself entangled in the branches of a tree that floated on a large lake. Tremayne, also on a tree-trunk, was waving to me from a little distance away. There was no sign of our camp. The whole of that little valley was totally submerged. Night was coming on, but we managed to paddle ourselves ashore, and, having got rid of our diving-suits, to snatch a little sleep on a rock above the still rising water. Next day, nearly starving, we took a sun-bearing for what we hoped would be civilization. We should have starved if we had not met some natives.

"WHAT happened?" said one of the party, as the old *Strathmora* pitched.

"Well," said Walters, "I don't exactly know. But this may help you to guess. Some centuries back the Spaniards discovered an Indian in possession of some antique gold vases. Upon being put to the torture, he confessed that he had discovered an Inca's treasure—they were scattered in different *caches* all over the country, apparently—and at last consented to guide them to it. But he warned them that if they dug for it water would cover the valley where it was hidden. They did dig and the result was an inundation—the lake now called Manan-Chile. Our treasure was presumably in a similar spot, and the detonation of the dynamite released a subterranean flood."

"And the treasure is still there?" asked someone.

"I guess it's pretty safe," said Walters, with a grim smile.

See back of frontispiece for

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENTS.

Not for the Young

by

ARNOLD BENNETT

Illustrated by A. K. Macdonald.

THE APPROACH OF AGE.

I WILL not fix even approximately any year in a man's life as marking the inception of middle-age. To do so might annoy at the start a number of readers whose sympathies I would like to keep as long as possible. I will merely assert that middle-age does, in fact, begin some time. Nobody is going to deny that. Now middle-age implies various important changes in the human machine and in the work which it can perform. Therefore, the onset of middle-age is a matter which deserves our serious attention if we wish to make the best of life; for it is not enough to make the best of one half of life; we should make the best of both halves.

"But," you cry impatiently, "why go to meet trouble? Why anticipate age? Let us keep young. At all costs let us keep young as long as we can."

Quite. I am in favour of keeping young; but I am not in favour of being ridiculous, as so many desperate adherents of the eternal-youth school certainly are. Nor am I sure that I understand the apparently widespread objection to age. Age has little to do with happiness. And if it does influence happiness one may safely say that the two happiest periods of human existence are childhood and middle-age. Young people are not specially happy. They have too many worries immediately in front of them; they have too much to do and too much to learn; they feel too deeply; they are too harsh, intolerant, and cruel in their judgments. Numbers of men do not enjoy regular happiness until they are past fifty; and if you asked them whether they would care to return to youthfulness they would reply with an emphatic "No." They know where they are. Youth seldom does. And to know just where you are is one of the foundations of happiness. Every age has its disadvantages and its compensations, which balance each other.

"At all costs let us keep young as long as we can."

When people exclaim to their juniors: "Oh, I wish I was young again!" they are deceitful and dishonest. They simply mean that they would like to combine all the advantages of youth with all the advantages of

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age, which is absurd. Moreover, even if youth had such immense advantages as some persons imagine, you cannot retain it by dint of urging yourself to retain it. You can pretend to retain it, and this means doing with difficulty all sorts of things which the real young do with ease; it means straining the machine and shortening the career of the machine, and it means being ridiculous in the sight of the wise.

For example, after a certain age the muscles of the eye usually cease to be what they were. The owner of the muscles is made aware of this unpleasant fact. He protests:—

"No! I am not ageing. I maintain that I am as young as ever I was, and I will prove it by compelling my eye-muscles to function properly. Me wear glasses? I won't!"

Futile obstinacy. He knows, and everybody around him knows, that he is not as young as he was. He knows, and everybody knows, that he is merely ruining his vision. Then, having perhaps tumbled over an unseen wheelbarrow, he does visit the oculist. And at first he is ashamed of his glasses, as voyagers are ashamed of being sea-sick, as though imperfect eyesight and sea-sickness were crimes and avoidable! At last he gets used to the glasses, which, by the way, enable him to see what a fool he has been.

As with eyesight, so with other functions, physical and moral. No amount of will-power and pretence will obviate the inescapable effects of time. Time always wins, but it wins least against those who treat it respectfully and sincerely, and most against those who scorn it. Not that I am advocating an abject or too early surrender to time. Some individuals fall too easily. They allow their habits to become fixed; they become hypochrondriacal and generally fussy; they seize upon the distant prospect of age as an excuse for partially abandoning the great struggle. And they are just as silly as those who will be young though they die of it. In this mighty affair of the merging of one age into another, as in all other earthly and heavenly affairs, common sense and moderation should preside over the proceedings.

THE STOCK-TAKING—PHYSICAL.

IT follows that a man who (as the French say) is "between two ages" owes to himself a serious duty—namely, to take stock of himself, to find out as well as he can what his resources and prospects are worth. This stock-taking must be twofold, physical and mental. (I use the word "mental" for want of a better, and I use it in the broadest sense.) Now, as I have earlier in these essays tried to show, the basis of the total individual life is physical. The physical and the mental react on each other. But the physical has more effect on the mental than the mental on the physical. The mental powers last longest. There are many historical instances of men who have retained their mental powers and enthusiasm after sixty, seventy, and even eighty years of age. Indeed, the brain is such a marvellous instrument that it is capable of recovering from no matter what fatigue after a comparatively short period of repose; whereas the physical powers definitely and incurably wane, and the force of the mental powers cannot under any circumstances preserve them. The active life of an athlete is brief. A first-rate athlete of over forty is the rarest exception. It is true that the waning of the physical powers does not seriously impair the mental if health is maintained; but at any age bad health will affect, if not the mental powers, at any rate the will to use them. It will also, of course, affect the mood of the mind.

Generally speaking, happiness is the consequence of health, not of righteous living and a clear conscience. The philosopher has said:—

Be good and you will be happy.

It would be more exact to say:—

Be healthy and you will be happy.

Bad health is far more destructive of contentment than a bad conscience. Many persons attribute to sagacity and integrity and unselfishness a state of happiness which may be due solely to a good digestion. On the other hand, many persons examine their consciences for the explanation of unhappiness when they would be better employed in examining their vile bodies. And to cap all, many persons are in bad health who have not the slightest idea that they are in bad health.

Hence the first act of the great stock-taking drama should deal with the physical side. Nobody but the subject himself can decide when the stock-taking should be held. But in case of doubt sooner is better than later. Nor should the man of advancing age (by the calendar) necessarily postpone his stock-taking because he honestly feels no symptom of physical deterioration. Those who regularly play games know from other signs than weariness that fatigue is not actually felt until it has been in progress for some time. The expert at lawn-tennis

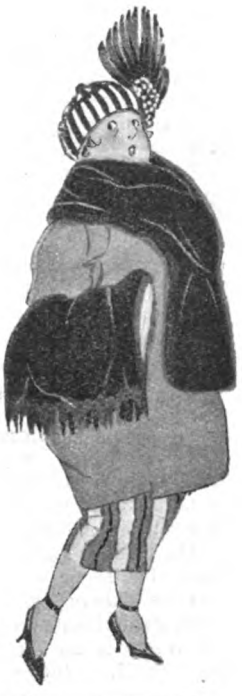
who keeps on missing strokes says to himself :—

"My body isn't yet aware of the fact, but my body is tired."

A stock-taking can do no harm, and it may do a deal of good. It may even do quite unexpected good. A man may be under the impression that he is ageing, and discover at the stock-taking that the observed deterioration was due to a temporary and slight cause which can be removed.

A doctor is essential to the stock-taking, and a doctor who is capable of an exhaustive and complete examination. Not one's regular doctor, however excellent he may be ! One's regular doctor will probably possess "local knowledge" which an outsider cannot pretend to; but a fresh view, unprejudiced by experience, is most desirable. Naturally both the regular attendant and the outsider may be consulted with advantage. (Nevertheless, it is better not to consult them at a joint conference !)

After the physical stock-taking the subject will have some knowledge of his whereabouts in this mundane predicament that we call life. He will know what to fear and what to rely on. He will know what his limitations are, what he can safely do, and what he can only do dangerously. He will know his real physical age, as distinguished from the mere tale of his years. He may be reassured or he may be alarmed. But even if he is alarmed it is less disagreeable to be alarmed and to take unpleasant precautions than to fall suddenly into a pit of whose existence he had no suspicion. Just as the wise man will visit his dentist at intervals without waiting for the toothache, so the wise man in apparently good health will visit a doctor when he reaches the time of life at which he notices changes in his fellow-men. Vast numbers of us suffer from the delusion that, whereas others age, we are eternally youthful. It never is so.



Vast numbers of us suffer from the delusion that, whereas others age, we are eternally youthful.

THE STOCK-TAKING—MORAL.

"MORE than half of my years have gone—perhaps two -thirds of them have gone. My brain is as good as ever it was, and will probably remain so for yet a very long time, but my energy is not and cannot be what it was, and it will gradually dwindle."

This represents the frame of mind in which the man who would make the best of life must approach the second part—the moral part—of his stock-taking. It sounds rather solemn, and it emphatically is ; but the man who cannot face solemnities in a serious spirit will not make the best of life. A cheerful optimism is not everything. It is necessary sometimes to stand up to facts and look them straight in the eye, and find out for certain whether they are pleasant or unpleasant.

You will want no doctor for this branch of stock-taking. You have to do it for yourself, though you may get a little help indirectly from friends who express their opinions without being asked, and from reserved and judicious friends whose hints and apparently casual remarks have far more significance than the chatterings of those

who always have inexhaustible quantities of advice to offer. But you cannot do it for yourself unless you are honest with yourself; and, except in the middle of the night, it is not easy to be honest with yourself.

The following questions have to be asked and answered:—

"I am on a certain path. Where is it leading me?" We are apt to get so used to a path, so accustomed to looking only at the daily ground under our feet, that we lose sight of the direction of the path, which indeed for all we know may have ceased to have any direction at all. There are men who think they are moving straight onwards, whereas in truth they are going round and round like a traveller straying in a dark forest.

"I had ambitions. I still have them. Are they any nearer attainment than they were? Is there a reasonable chance of me attaining them before the attainment is worthless to me?" There are men who in the intense preoccupation of the struggle lose the sense of practical possibilities, just as others lose the sense of direction. They grow blindly obstinate, and their own obstinacy is to them the dearest thing in the world. Imagine an athlete who is determined to run the hundred yards in ten seconds. He tries and tries. He will not leave off trying. He reaches forty years of age. The ambition is perfectly hopeless, but he is still trying. A fool, of course. Plucky, persevering, but obviously a fool in the matter of his ambition! Well, there are men who, in the pursuit of graver ambitions, are precisely as foolish as that ageing athlete.

"I am advancing, but have I advanced as far as I expected to advance? If not, is the failure to do so due to my having expected too much or is it due to wrong methods?"

"Am I rendering reasonably happy or unreasonably unhappy the fellow-creatures who share my existence?" There are men whom ambition transforms into monsters of selfishness, heartless indifference, and even cruelty; and they are convinced that ambition justifies everything. Nay, they regard themselves as the salt of the earth.

"Is my conscience clear? Nobody's conscience is clear, but is it tolerably clear? If not, what is the first step towards clearing it?"

"Am I happy? Nobody is or should be entirely happy, but am I fairly happy? If not, why not? Is it because my instincts are being continually thwarted, or because I don't make an endeavour to be happy, or because of any mortal thing whatsoever that I can influence?"

"I am far off old age, but old age is approaching daily. The terrors of old age are solitude, neglect, boredom, lack of suitable activity, utter dependence on others, and the consciousness of wasted opportunities, of having achieved less than one might have achieved. What am I doing *now* to destroy those terrors, or even to minimize them? Am I sufficiently providing for the final years? Am I keeping my old friendships in repair and constructing new ones? Am I, in the intervals of satisfying my greatest interest, creating minor interests which will serve me later? Am I digging my groove so deep that I shall never be able to climb out of it? Am I slacking?"

Plainly to ask these questions and to answer them honestly and truly involves an enormous feat of standing outside yourself and looking at yourself as though you were somebody else. But the feat must be accomplished if life is to be lived fully. The right replies having been given, it should not be impossible to discover and apply such remedies as may be required. The man of middle-age has a tremendous advantage over the young in any crisis. He has experience.

THE WOMAN'S CASE.

THE case of women is different, and it is very much harder.

Certain instincts are more profound and more imperious in women than in men. Women want to be admired. Men also want to be admired; at least they like being admired, but not to the same degree as women, nor for the same qualities. A woman wants to be admired for youth, beauty, and charm; and she is in fact admired more for such qualities than for any others. If this state of affairs is wrong the blame attaches quite as much to men as to women, to the admirers as to the admired. A man appreciates admiration chiefly of his energy, brains, and protective power. He stands as good a chance of being admired at fifty as at twenty-five—perhaps a better chance. He contemplates with comparative equanimity the onset of the years. A woman regards time as her enemy, for it steadily robs her of two of the admired qualities, and at best it impairs the third. Beyond doubt, other things being equal, a man will turn to a woman of twenty-five rather than to a woman of thirty-five, and to a woman of thirty-five rather than to a woman of forty-five—even though the one is by miracle as attractive as the other. You may protest that this is unjust. It may be, but it is so.

The average woman will spare no pains in the daily struggle to strengthen her forces against the relentless adversary. And the apparatus which has gradually come into

Other things being equal, a man will turn to a woman of twenty-five rather than to a woman of thirty-five.

being to assist her is immense, complicated, and very impressive. Go into no matter what important city, and you will find in the centre of that city that the most important buildings are wholly or mainly devoted to the business of helping women to enhance their attractiveness, to appear younger than they actually are, to appear more beautiful than they actually are, and to hide or disguise the more glaring mistakes of nature. The very term "the shops" has now been specialized to mean shops for women's clothes and toilette. No other shops seriously count.

Men's tailors seldom have their establishments in main streets; they seldom attempt the slightest display. They perch themselves in side-streets, and generally they put nothing in the windows. Imagine the sensation if vast edifices dedicated to the adornment and rejuvenating of men were suddenly to spring up in our cities, if the pavements in front of them were thronged with men eager to make the best of themselves physically, and if the advertisement columns of the daily papers were every day enlivened by huge announcements of bargains in men's attire, illustrated by pictures of men posing in attitudes calculated to attract! Imagine the effect of such phenomena, and you will realize better the immensity of the *rôle* played by women's adornment in the life of an organized society—a *rôle* approved and encouraged by almost everybody, male and female. You will realize the terrific force of the woman's desire to remain in appearance as young and as attractive as possible.

Do not suppose that this condition of things is due wholly or mainly to the woman's desire to marry, and to the fact that as women outnumber men a keen competition exists among women for men.

In the first place, the relative scarcity of men is greatly exaggerated in the public mind. There are, roughly, nineteen men to every twenty women of marriageable age; the disproportion is not sufficient to account for the size and prosperity of "the shops." I grant that women are more anxious to marry than men, but that is not really an argument against my position, because the desire to seem young and beautiful persists intensely in a woman after she has obtained all the man she desires. The strange and wonderful condition of things is due to an elemental and unchangeable ordinance of nature; and it requires no other justification.

The ordinance is so influential that women will sometimes continue to obey it to the best of their ability when obedience to it becomes not merely futile but tragic. Look at that wrinkled lady whose face is covered thick with rouge and powder and Heaven knows what; look at her absurdly youthful costume; watch her imitation of a youthful walk. The spectacle is terrible. What is she hoping for? I will tell you what she is hoping for. She is hoping that,

seen at a little distance, she may be mistaken during two seconds—two seconds—for a woman half her age. And to win those two seconds of attention and admiration she will spend hours of ingenious and expert toil. Such is the astounding dominion of a basic instinct.

The instance is, of course, extreme. But the majority of women go down into middle-age fighting to keep that which they know they cannot keep. In this matter the supreme symbol of womanhood is the *danseuse*. She is admired, wooed, fêted, spoilt, applauded, worshipped. But within her heart is the cankerous knowledge that beyond a certain age she cannot dance in public and will not be allowed to dance, and that the time is surely coming when she will cease utterly to get applause, and none but a few faithful friends will look twice at her save in pity, and that she will be reduced to teaching others younger and more beautiful than herself to take the place which she once held.

Nevertheless, the fate of the average woman need not be pictured in colours too dark. We do not in fact see ladies over forty going about in weeds for their departed physical charms, or weeping softly in motor-buses because the sight of them will never again brighten the raiding eye of unknown men. Somehow or other they do accustom themselves to their changed situation in the regard of the curious world, and they do find compensations which in a greater or less degree reconcile them to the permanent loss of very precious satisfactions. This is notorious and within the knowledge of everybody. At the same time let us not dismiss a grave matter too lightly, nor ignore the fact that in certain instances a woman's arrival into middle-age is a tremendous tragedy from which she never during the rest of her life fully recovers. Let us note also that men are generally far too indifferent to the scarcely-spoken sufferings of women whose mirrors tell them awful truths —messages reinforced by the casual disdainful glances of passers-by in the street.

HOW does a woman contrive without secret disaster to cross the bridge between the period of physical attractiveness and the second and unexciting period of her existence?

We can reach the answer to the question by inquiring into the case of the woman to whom the years bring tragedy. Such a woman has lived for admiration; she has depended on admiration, and depended on nothing else. She has, in practice, assumed that the qualities which gave her power and joy would last for ever. She has done worse than, in the ordinary sense, live on her capital. She has lived on a sort of treacherous capital which, besides producing no interest whatever, was steadily dwindling into utter valuelessness. She has based her claim to the affection and attention of society exclusively upon the perishable part of herself. She has been content to receive without giving, because society was ready to give without receiving. She has permitted herself to be spoilt. She has presumed upon the present. She has put all her eggs into one basket. She has refused to learn from the universal experience of other women. She has shut her ears to the approaching footsteps of the future. She has persisted too long in the pretence that things are not what they are. She has believed in miracles. There are no miracles. The unequal fight is protracted, but it has an end. Defeated, she looks round for a support. But every human being has to provide his own support in the supreme moral crises, and she has provided none. Her life is over, and her doom is to go on living, if only in the semblance of an old malicious cat.

The case is fortunately exceptional, though by no means extremely rare. The average woman has some sense, and either out of the kindness of her nature or out of mere self-interest she starts in time to insure herself against total loss. She discounts the worst kind of admiration and seeks to cultivate the better kind. She is not content to *be*; she sets forth on a course of *doing*. If she pleases without effort, she realizes that the ability to please without effort is transient, and she learns a new and lasting ability. She creates interests for herself which are independent of time. She provides against the advent of the lean years. She makes herself indispensable to some individual or group of individuals. She comprehends that time cannot wither the fruit of a kind smile, and that unselfishness and devotion exercise an enchantment that nothing can impair. She tries to please. It is an endeavour that, honestly made, cannot fail. For the desire to be pleased she substitutes the desire to give pleasure. As fast as she loses ground on one side she gains ground on another side. She treats the future with respect, as one respects a formidable enemy. She defies time by the sole method by which time can be defied successfully—by pitting against it those powers of mind and heart that are as immune from its touch as gold is immune from rust. She may not do these wonderful things consciously, or quite selfishly, or quite unselfishly, or perfectly, or according to a prearranged plan; but she somehow does them.

The result is not always, is very seldom, entirely satisfactory to the feminine part

of her, but it is as satisfactory as most results are in this interesting and inexplicable world. Without women of middle-age the said world would be much more lugubrious than it actually is.

Many women need not take stock, on the man's scale or at his period. They marry, have children ; their way of life is appointed for them, and they cannot alter it. What is more, they have little desire to alter it. Their existence is full ; they are interested, even absorbed ; and they have as much happiness as destiny has decided to vouchsafe to the average individual. But they can rarely avoid stock-taking in the end. For children grow up and depart, and although the children usually display a forbearing anxiety about their mothers they do not usually make any serious attempt to fill the gap which their departure has created. The mother must therefore take stock in time of her relations with her children's father, who too often until it is too late is treated as a mere inevitable but no-longer-necessary human adjunct. She must also take stock of her own provision for filling the gap. Of course, grandchildren may partially fill it, but grandchildren are not so sure as they were.

A woman of fifty or sixty may wake up one morning to discover that she has nothing, or not enough, to live for, because when the present absorbed her she yielded too fully to its attraction and forgot the future. She is bored. Boredom is generally a fatal disease, and has killed more middle-aged people than phlebitis, bronchitis, or arthritis.

Other women, the women who seem likely to have to depend exclusively on their own resources for the rest of life, must take stock earlier than men—much earlier, for they mature and fade earlier, and their direction is taken earlier. A single woman who leaves her stock-taking till forty may have left it too late.

A professional woman must examine realistically what her prospects are, and she must satisfy herself that her profession will not ultimately disappoint her, filling her with regrets instead of with satisfactions. Few women stay in love with a profession. Most of them love a profession violently for a while, and then passion turns to hatred.

The single woman with private means is menaced with dreadful dangers. You can see her wandering all over the Continent of Europe trying to evade those dangers and not succeeding, because they cannot be evaded by flight. They can only be defeated in a straight fight and by dint of cultivating every feminine attribute that the situation has left available to her. The European hotels are largely inhabited by secret tragedies due to early negligence in taking stock.

Her children's **father is too** often treated **as a mere** inevitable but **no-longer-necessary human adjunct.**

The single woman who is absolutely dependent for food, clothes, and shelter on the life or the whim of another being is in the worst pass of all. She may indeed be so helpless that she has no stock to take. But such women ought not to exist, and their mere existence is a reproach to those who had charge of their youth.

MUSTARD-POT—MOUNTEBANK

by

GILBERT FRANKAU

ILLUSTRATED BY GILBERT HOLIDAY

I.

LOATH though I am to cast any aspersion on the character of so noble, so celebrated, and so coruscating a prad as my gigantic yellow horse-friend, Mustard-Pot, truth forces me to admit that three years in the Shires, three winters of lavish corn-feeding and three summers of lavish grass, have not widened his equine outlook. More and more, as the easy months go by, he tends to become—possibly in imitation of his human betters—a mere hunter; interested solely in "the chase," in questions of pace and pedigree, of "casts" and "scent," and the other mysteries of his present calling. Also—to be quite frank on an unpleasant topic—he is developing a reticence about his past which I can only describe as "snobbish."

Yet Mustard-Pot's past, as the past of so many of us, is in many ways more interesting than his present. There was, you see, a recklessness about that past, and a fecklessness about it, and a certain where-the-devil-is-my-next-feed-coming-from Bohemianism which—at any rate from a mere story-teller's point of view—compares very favourably with the "fourteen-pound-of-oats" and "mind-you-dry-his-ears-Jenkins" atmosphere of Sir Victor Plowright Lomondham, Bart.'s, highly-efficient stables.

For what, from the storyteller's point of view, is a mere foxhunter, whether human or equine? His appeal is limited—as limited as his adventures must be! Can your fox-hunting man, for instance, balance a peacock's feather on his nose? Or your fox-hunting woman leap deftly toe-poised from her Champion-and-Wilton through a hoop of gas-jets? Or your fox-hunting horse dance the sawdust circle on his hind hoofs? Isn't the glamour of "the chase"—all said and done—a farthing rushlight sort of glamour against the glamour of HERBERT HANKS'S MAMMOTH EQUESTRIAN CIRCUS?

Of course it is! Of course, to quote Herbert Hanks's handbills, "The circus is the thing! Never mind your troubles—leave 'em at home. But bring the kiddies. Bring 'em along—bring 'em along—bring 'em along. *They're* half price—but you won't think about the price once you're inside. Come and see Bogo the Clown in his screamingly funny act, 'Father's Pants.' Come and see Goldylocks, the Queen of the Ring, in her feats of bareback horsemanship. Come and see her ride Monster—the biggest horse ever foaled. Come and see the Elephants! The Elephants!! The Enormous Indian Elephants!!!"

Sorry, Mustard-Pot, old thing; but the murder's out now; and though doubtless you'll snort with rage when you read it, the story of Bogo and Goldylocks (*Quorum pars magna fuis*—perhaps the classical allusion may soften the blow to your snobbish, narrow-minded soul) will have to be told.

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II.

"THIS," quoth Mr. Herbert Hanks, surveying the grimed account-book with a beery and melancholious eye, "is my blinkin' Waterloo—the grave, so to speak, of all my financial hopes. I'm done in—that's what I am—done in by the worst August that ever happened and a parcel of 'draws' that don't even draw their salaries. Pish! And likewise tush! Who would be a circus proprietor?"

He spat scientifically through the tent-flap; rose heavily from the uncertain camp-stool; twirled a long black moustache with a short, stubby-fingered hand; and shambled out—an ungainly, broad-shouldered figure in his grey flannel trousers, yellow gym. shoes, and stained sports coat.

The rain was still drizzling steadily, as it had drizzled ever since the circus struck Diddlehill-cum-Hardy—ten miles from anywhere, on the bleak Yorkshire moorlands. The roof of the yellow property-wagon spouted four continuous runnels. The big, square show marquee and the little conical living tents loomed dirty grey against a background of sodden dun. The tarpaulin-covered Ford—sole means of swift conveyance in the lumbering steam-drawn caravan—sank tyre-deep in yellow slime, some thirty yards from the deserted high road; beside which the traction engine poked a smokeless funnel at the smoky skies.

"Sugar it!" quoth Mr. Herbert Hanks. "May the Deity sugar the entire contraption."

He returned to the office-tent, and began rummaging among the contents of an untidy suit-case. At the bottom of the suit-case lay a bag—a small canvas bank bag, which jingled as he drew it forth.

"Seven pounds seventeen and ninepence three-farthings," quoth Mr. Herbert Hanks. And again: "Sugar it!"

Re-wrapping the bag in a soiled flannel shirt and thrusting it back into the bottom of the suit-case, he started in to consider the future. The future, regarded from a coldly materialistic view-point, loomed black enough. Diddlehill-cum-Hardy, as a credit proposition, was hopeless. Whether one required—as one undoubtedly did require—coal for one's engine, food for one's "artistes," or fodder for one's horses ("Praise the Lord I sold them elephants at Leeds," interpolated Mr. Herbert Hanks), Diddlehill-cum-Hardy insisted upon "t' brass" before parting with a penn'orth of the necessary commodities. While as for "patronizing the finest show on earth," Diddlehill-cum-Hardy, having—to its own shrewd idea—been "swizzled" over the non-materialization of the elephants, promised it in the out-of-date handbills, could only be relied upon to abstain.

"Seven pounds seventeen *and* ninepence three-farthings," repeated the glooming Hanks.

Feet, squelching without, disturbed his ruminations; and a moment later there appeared, round-about and menacing at the tent-flap, the check-capped, be-sweatered figure of Loony Harris, better known, by those who studied their handbills, as Bogo the Clown.

"Mornin', Loony," remarked the circus proprietor.

"Mornin' to you, Mr. 'Anks," retorted the clown. And he added, his plump, clean-shaven face black as a thunder-cloud: "*Saturday* mornin', I may venture to remind you, Mr. 'Anks."

"And what if it *is* Saturday?" The beery eyes, losing their melancholy, displayed an ominous glint. "What if it *is* Saturday, Loony?"

Followed a silence, the silence of giants preparing for combat. Then the round-about little man went on: "Only this, Mr. 'Anks, that in our profession salaries is due on the Friday night."

A whip, a long, vicious, black-handled lungeing whip, hung from the tent-pole; and Mr. Herbert Hanks regarded that whip for several seconds before replying: "Well—I never said they weren't, did I?"

"Not in so many words." The clown, too, looked towards the tent-pole. "Not in so many words, Mr. 'Anks. But deeds is more than words, and this morning *being* Saturday——"

"You thought you'd remind me of the fact that your salary hadn't been paid."

"Exactly, Mr. 'Anks."

"Then let me tell you"—the circus proprietor grasped abruptly for his whip—"that I don't need no reminding. You and the rest of them will be paid what's due to you after to-night's performance. Neither sooner nor later. Do you get me, Loony?"

Loony Harris, however, stood his ground.

"If you don't pay up," remarked Loony Harris, "there won't be no to-night's performance. Nor," emphatically, "no this afternoon's performance neither. Me and my missus have made up our minds. When you took us on you said: 'Grub and a quid.' That's what you said—and my missus can prove it. Well—we ain't had much grub, and this week we ain't had no quid. Wherefore—as I used to say when I was in the legit.—no pay, no play's our motto. And the rest of the mob's with us."

Followed another silence—and the wilting of Mr. Herbert Hanks.

"Now, look here, Loony," wilted he,

" don't you cut up rough. Things is bad. Damn bad. I'll admit that to you—tho' I wouldn't to everyone. But H. H. isn't the man to do the dirty on his artistes. Not he. You ask anyone that knows him, and *they*'ll tell you."

" Possibly they will "—Loony continued to stand his ground—" and possibly they won't. That—as we used to say in the legit.—is beside the question. The question is," more emphatically than ever, " do we get our quid ? "

Tactfully, the circus proprietor changed the subject. " Thirsty work talking," remarked he, sympathetically.

" Agreed." The clown's voice lost a little of his hostility. " Agreed. What've you got ? Beer ? "

For answer, the other—still grasping his whip—stooped to a wooden case half-hidden under the closed tent-fly and withdrew a bottle, a square and a tempting gin-bottle, which Loony Harris eyed as a man eyes his first love.

" Old Tom ! " gasped Loony.

" Neither more nor less," confirmed Loony's employer.

III.

THE Loony Harris who, some fifteen minutes later, squelched blithely past the tarpaulined Ford, and blithely towards the living-tents, might have been treading on the proverbial air. True that no coins jingled in his trouser-pocket ! Yet what were base coins in baser pockets compared with that which still warmed the very cockles of his sanguine soul ? Nothing—nothing at all ! " H. H. is all right," he murmured, squelching. " H. H. is a sport. *He* isn't the man to do the dirty on his artistes."

Nevertheless, arrived at his own tent, Loony Harris, better known as Bogo the Clown, hesitated—hesitated considerably before the closed flap. From behind that flap came voices—a hum of quarrelsome voices, shrill above which he recognized the voice of his wife.

" If I had *my* way with him," shrilled Mrs. Harris, " I'd scratch his eyes out. That's what I'd do to him. Herbert Hanks, indeed ! His name ain't Hanks—it's Hisaacs. Hisaacs the Black Jew. Not that I've anything against Jews—so long as they're rich ones."

Whereupon, more hesitant than ever, Mrs. Harris's husband lifted the tent-flap and passed in. A silence greeted him ; and in that silence he inspected the " mob." The " mob " were all there—foregathered round the litter of his conjugal breakfast to hear his news. " Sports ! " commented his gin-warmed soul. " Sports, every one of them. *They* won't mind."

But the mob, informed that " they'd all get their money all right if they'd only wait till after the evening's performance," did mind. They minded enormously. " Pip and Squeak, the finest tumblers in Europe " —two rat-faced, pimple-nosed, Woodbine-smoking youths who combined Socialistic leanings with the Scotch money-temperament—decided that the thing was a " do " : " a regular do on the whole caboodle of us." Marlow, the trick-cyclist, a lantern-jawed, middle-aged mountebank whose meanness had driven him to abjure all save the freest of free alcohol, opined with a sniff that " Loony had been got at." Marlow's daughter, thin, vixenish, and vivacious, agreed with her father. Beaver Belinda, once the admitted star of all bearded ladies, but now, alas ! a mere camp-follower, thought " they'd be lucky if they got a bob." While as for Mrs. Loony—" Goldy-locks, Queen of the Ring "—her language transcended the rage of Lady Macbeth.

" You boob ! " screamed Mrs. Loony. " You mutt ! You poor, putty-faced, weak-kneed fish ! Didn't I tell you to have it out with him ? Didn't you promise me that you would have it out with him ? Didn't we all agree that if he wouldn't brass up we'd put the ruddy kybosh on him ? Didn't we agree that, Loony ? "

" We did, me dear, we did." The clown, his courage and the gin in him alike exhausted, sat down heavily among the conjugal blankets. " And that's what I told him. ' Mr. 'Anks,' I said, ' we're all agreed. No pay, no play. That's our motto.' But what's the use of talking ? Talking won't provide the cash to take us home. If we *don't* play this afternoon, and he *don't* pay us, we're stranded. That's what we are. Stranded like a lot of sardines."

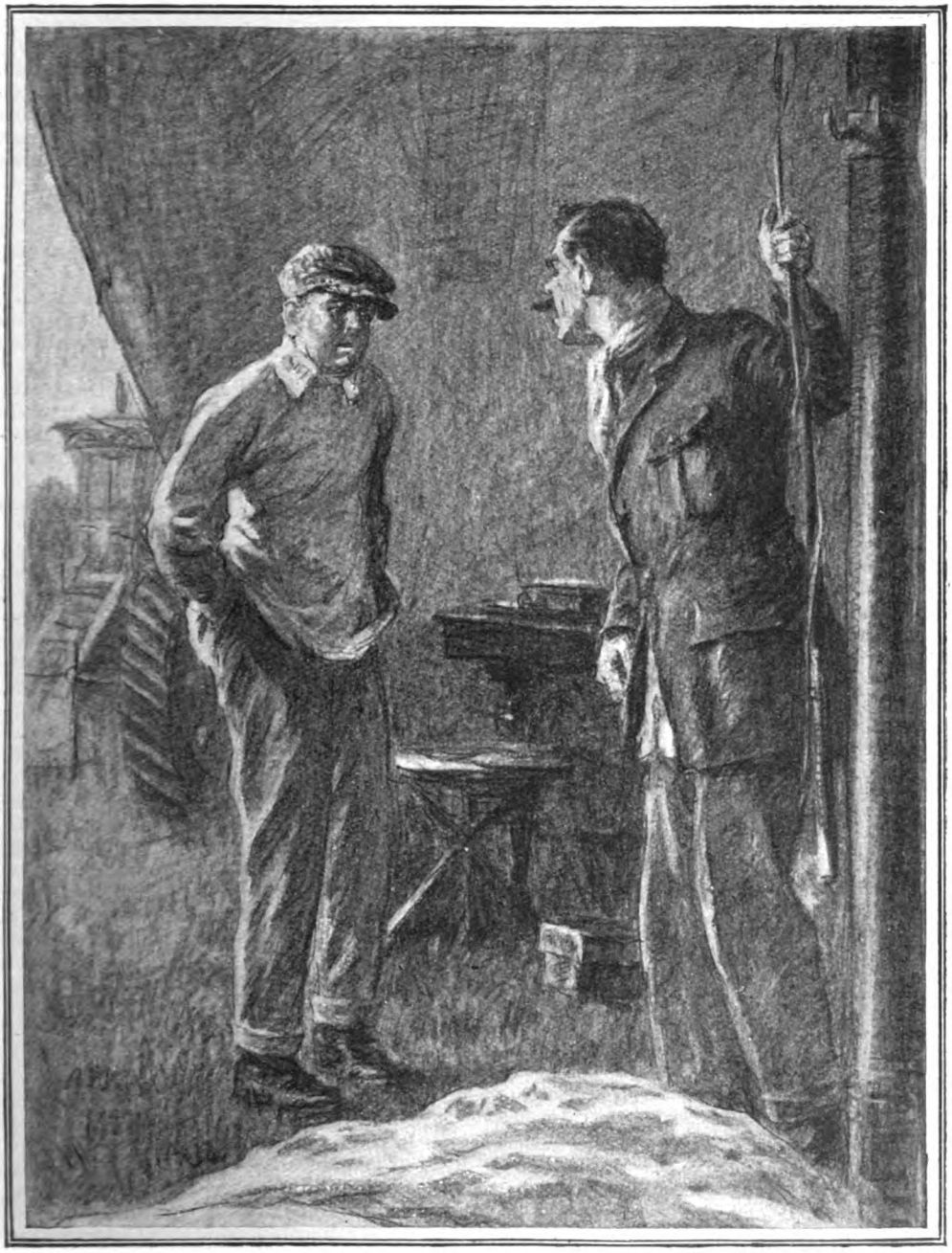
" I'm not stranded," put in Marlow. " I've got the bikes."

" One can't *eat* bikes," commented Marlow's daughter.

" We can pawn 'em, though." Past experience tinged the trick-cyclist's remark with bitterness. " And I'd rather pawn them than work for this—this welsher."

Pip and Squeak, however, having nothing pawnable except two pairs of somewhat soiled spangle-suits, were inclined to agree with the force of Loony Harris's last argument ; and Beaver Belinda also supporting it, the strike committee, after some further palaver, broke up. " Scallywags," commented the Queen of the Ring as the tent-flap fell to behind the last of them. " Scallywags and nincompoops ! If I had my way——"

Speechless with indignation, she began to tidy up the breakfast things. Equally speechless—for there is nothing so dead as



"Then let me tell you"— the circus proprietor grasped abruptly for his whip—"that you and the rest of them will be paid after to-night's performance. Neither sooner nor later."

dead gin—her husband watched the slummocky process. "She's a terror," he thought, "a holy terror! It's a marvel, a blinkin' marvel, how I've put up with her all these years."

He began to speculate, lying there doglike among the unmade blankets, on the causes of his putting up with her. "It ain't because she's a good wife," he speculated, "and it ain't because of the business.

I'd do better, heaps better, on me own. It ain't even as if we had kids. Then wot" —emphatically—" wot in 'ell is it that prevents me from 'opping it ? "

Finally, his fuddled mind dimly recalling some phrase he had once spouted in the " legitimate drama," some phrase about " beauty drawing a bloke with her married 'air," Loony Harris decided that nothing except the physical perfections of " Goldylocks " (her real name happened to be Mildred, but her " married 'air " being down her back at the moment made the ringside appellation more fitting) had kept him so long tolerant of her other disadvantages.

" Beauty ! " speculated he, his brown eyes following her about the tent. " It's beauty wot does the trick."

And indeed, if one is not over-particular on the subject of cleanliness ; if one approves that type of rumbustious womanhood which the North Country dialect onomatopœically terms " a bolly-oxer " ; if one has a penchant for big cow-like eyes, fat pink cheeks, and fat red lips, the arms of a retired wrestler and hips to match, one might agree with more incongruous verdicts than Loony Harris's considered judgment on the wife of his bosom, who now, her slummocky jobs finished, began her equally slummocky hairdressing.

" Going to lie there all day ? " she commented between a comb-stroke and a brush-stroke.

" No." Loony Harris heaved himself to his feet. " No. I'm goin' out."

" Where to ? "

" See after the nags, of course."

" It ain't your job to see after the nags."

" I knows that as well as you do."

Harris, snorting audibly, made his way out of the connubial bell-tent and across the sodden grass towards the big marquee. The sky was still grey above his diminished head. The rain drizzled and drizzled. " Bust any show, this would," he ruminated, pushing aside the dank canvas and hopping deftly over the wooden benches, over the sawdust, and between yet more benches till he came to the " stables."

Here, tethered miserable under sloped tarpaulins, seven quadrupeds stood munching the last of Herbert Hanks's hay. All of them, even the tiny black Shetland, were thin ; but thinnest of all, so thin that it seemed to the clown as though one could have struck matches on his projecting ribs, was that peculiar steed whom the out-of-date handbills referred to as " Monster." The original Monster had long since perished ; but his substitute lived well up (seventeen hands and a bittock up) to the name. He had the frame of a giant ; and his hocks, his pasterns—every bone and sinew of him from poll to navicular—matched the framework : a framework whose skin, stretched tighter than the soiled spangle-suits of Pip and Squeak, displayed that pale yellow colouring which, in later years, became celebrated throughout fox-hunting England.

" Poor old Margarine ! " ejaculated Bogo the Clown, surveying this caricature of a prad. " Poor old Marge ! You're a rum 'un, you are—and no error."

The horse, as though understanding, snuffled ; and the clown, still talking to himself, stooped to gather a handful of musty hay from the trampled dirt.

" Here y'are," said the clown.

Margarine (if Mustard-Pot will excuse my designating him by the old vulgar nickname) took the hay in his prehensile lips and champed it mournfully between his teeth. Meanwhile, the clown continued to talk.

" You and me," said the clown, gentling that enormous yellow muzzle, " is much of a muchness. Put upon—that's what we are. Me with 'er tongue, and you with 'er whip—that wife of mine does what she likes with the pair of us. Wherefore—as we used to say in the legit.—if I was you, old sport, I should 'op it. Yuss—that's what I'd do—'op it ; bolt ; do a bunk. *You* could, easy enough."

Margarine, however, showed no signs of obeying the advice ; and after a little while the clown, shaking his head as one who, smitten with some great idea, yet lacks the courage to put that idea into execution, wandered away—to be followed by Benjamin, the half-witted stable-boy, with a curry-comb, a canvas water-bucket, and various lengths of ribbon destined for the Monster's mane and tail when he should leap, *vide* handbills, " the biggest five-barred gate in England."

IV.

THERE are some subjects—say the older chroniclers, from whom a modern may learn much and occasionally steal a little—too painful for words. Among these subjects, indubitably, must be included the Saturday afternoon performance of Herbert Hanks's Mammoth Equestrian Circus in the parish of Diddlehill-cum-Hardy, Yorkshire. Nothing, at that particular performance, seemed to " go over." The audience—a meagre handful of rain-soaked hobbledehoys and rain-soaked lasses—were even more bored than the performers. They neither clapped applause nor shouted disapprobation. They just sat, in stolid Yorkshire fashion—sat the thing out, turn by turn, hoping against hope for one thrilling

minute, one sixty-second ecstasy which would justify the expenditure of their hard-earned "brass."

But no ecstasy was vouchsafed. The tumbles of Pip and Squeak were the tumbles of tired schoolboys; Marlow might have been a trade union plumber cycling to Monday's job; Marlow's daughter (she played her banjo that afternoon, and—what was worse—sang to it) a Sunday-school teacher at a choir-feast; the "Great Herbert Hanks" in his waiter's costume looked like a mute with a lunging whip; while as for Bogo the Clown—*his* face would have curdled skim milk.

Nor—incredible as it is to relate—did the eventual appearance of "the Queen of the Ring" effect any improvement in the dramatic temperature. Though she made her bow gallantly enough, and smiled round the half-empty benches as if she had been the sweetest-tempered Goldylocks in the kingdom, the hobbledehoys and their lasses failed to respond. They just sat on, on and on, stolid, unmoving, contemptuous, while she rode two horses, while she rode three, while she leaped—a vast anachronistic figure in her out-of-date hunting habit—the low brushwood hurdles which the half-witted stable-boy set up here and there about the sawdusted arena.

"Gawd!" muttered the Great Herbert Hanks, hardly bothering to crack his whip. "Gawd! What a blinkin' wash-out!" Then, as Goldylocks, bowing and smirking, made her penultimate exit to the deadest of dead silences, and Bogo, the Shetland pony between his knees, came running in, he pulled his showman-soul together, and shouted, in approved ringmaster style: "Here, what are *you* doing in the arena?"

"Doing!" Bogo's answer, to any save a bored bucolic audience, would have been sheer comedy. "Doing! Why, I'm enjoying myself, of course."

"Oh, are you? Well, you can't enjoy yourself here."

"Can't I?"

"No, you can't."

"Why not?"

"Because I say so."

The back-chat continued; and with its continuance the audience grew restive. The Shetland, appropriately pinched, kicked Bogo off its back—and the restiveness subsided. "I'll get a laugh yet," thought the prostrate Bogo. But no laugh came—even when the Shetland's teeth tore for the carrot hidden in the seat of his property pants.

"Gawd!" repeated the Great Herbert *sotto voce*. And once again, "Gawd!" Never, never in all his years of circus-hood, had he known that incident of the pants go for nothing. It was uncanny—more than uncanny. It—it meant something. Meant—disaster. "If that don't make 'em laugh," opined his superstitious soul, "then nothing won't do the trick; and I may as well give up the biz."

Bogo, crestfallen, made his unapplauded exit; and the Monster, a be-tighted, ballet-skirted Goldylocks pirouetting on his bared back, came cantering in.

"Be'old," cried the Great Herbert, "be-'old the Queen of the Ring, and the largest 'orse ever foaled."

But the cry carried no conviction. "What's the use?" thought the Great Herbert. "What's the use of telling 'em the tale? What's the use of Barnum 'isself when the blighters can't see nothing funny in an animal biting a man in the seat of his trousies?" And it seemed to him, as he lifted the fourteen-stone horsewoman from her saddle and handed her the lunging whip, as though the very Spirit of Comedy had taken wings and departed this earth, carrying his livelihood with it. "It's all U.P.," he decided. "Yuss. The circus biz is all U.P. This show ain't an asset—it's a ruddy liability. The sooner I cut my losses on it, the better."

MEANWHILE Goldylocks, plying an expert lash, was also glooming. "I oughtn't to 'ave given up the 'oops," gloomed she, as the Monster reared waltzing on his hind-hoofs. "No, I never ought to 'ave given up the 'oops—even though I do weigh fourteen stone. This sort of thing don't get 'em. It don't get 'em a bit."

The Monster, obedient to the whip, ceased his waltzing; did his polka-walk; feigned dead on the sawdust; sprang to life again. The half-witted boy brought "the biggest five-barred gate in England." The Monster, lashed to a hand-canter, jumped the gate; jumped it again; cantered out of the ring. Goldylocks bowed to the hobbledehoys. The rest of the company—Bogo, balancing the feather on his nose, among them—came bounding in. The Great Herbert Hanks spoke his peroration: "That, ladies and gentlemen, is all we have to show you this afternoon. If we've amused you, we hope you'll tell your friends. To-night's performance will be a gala performance—our last in Diddlehill."

Whereupon the audience, unmoved as ever, filed out into the rain-drizzle; and Goldylocks, her rouged lips no longer smiling, turned on her grease-painted husband with a terse:—

"'Ere, you. Go and tell Beaver Belinda we want our tea."

V.

NOW, in a travelling circus, tea—unlike those makeshift feeds dinner and breakfast—is a communal function, a matey kind of a meat-meal whereover, even in the worst of weathers, the ladies exchange small talk and the gentlemen—always presupposing that one is within reach of a daily paper—racing intelligence. Also—as Beaver Belinda, presiding benignant over the enormous brown tea-pot which dominated the smoky interior of the property-wagon, explained to her fellows—it is customary for "the boss" to attend.

"Not that I altogether blame 'im for keeping away," continued the ex-bearded lady. "Under the circs., perhaps, it'd be 'ardly tackful of 'im to put in an appearance."

"Tactful!" The trick-cyclist smiled sardonically at the hunk of bully-beef on his tin plate. "'Tain't tact that keeps him away. *He* wouldn't put up with this—this 'ere garbage. I'll bet *he's* got a tasty bit of tucker for *his* tea."

Beaver Belinda, her effort at light conversation frustrated, sank to ruminant gloom behind the brown pot. The cyclist's vixenish daughter chuckled. Pip and Squeak helped themselves to the last of the mustard. Goldylocks buried a nose to which a remnant of grease-paint still adhered, for promise of the night's gala performance, in her third mug of Lipton's; and emerged spluttering:—

"Wonder we all didn't get the bird this afternoon! Must say I'd rather 'ave 'ad the bird than them there frozen faces. These Yorkshire tykes are the limit—and no error. Tykes! That's just what they are. And dirty tykes at that."

She ranted on; till her husband, thinking to appease, put in: "P'r'aps it'll go better to-night, dearie."

"'Twon't be your fault if it does," was the cheerful retort. "I've seen some two-penny-'a'penny clowns in *my* time. But you—you're about a penny-farthing."

Miss Marlow tittered again; Mrs. Harris's round-about husband subsided, as Beaver Belinda, into a black depression; and the meal continued gloomily towards its ending. "Blast it," thought Mrs. Harris's husband during that continuance. "Blast it and sugar it. Wot's the sense in sticking to a creature like that? Beautiful! Well—supposin' she *is* beautiful. Beauty don't make up for hinsults." Then he drained his cup to the bottom; wiped his clean-shaven lips on the sleeve of his sweater; rose, and made slowly round the table for the back door of the wagon.

"What's the weather like, Bogo?" asked Pip, as he came to it.

"Still rainin' cats and dawgs, I expect," replied the clown, pulling aside the soiled lace which covered the round glass upper panel.

"'Oo the 'ell cares about the weather?" put in Squeak, querulously. "So long as we get our brass after this 'ere gala performance, it can rain pirate omnibuses for all I——"

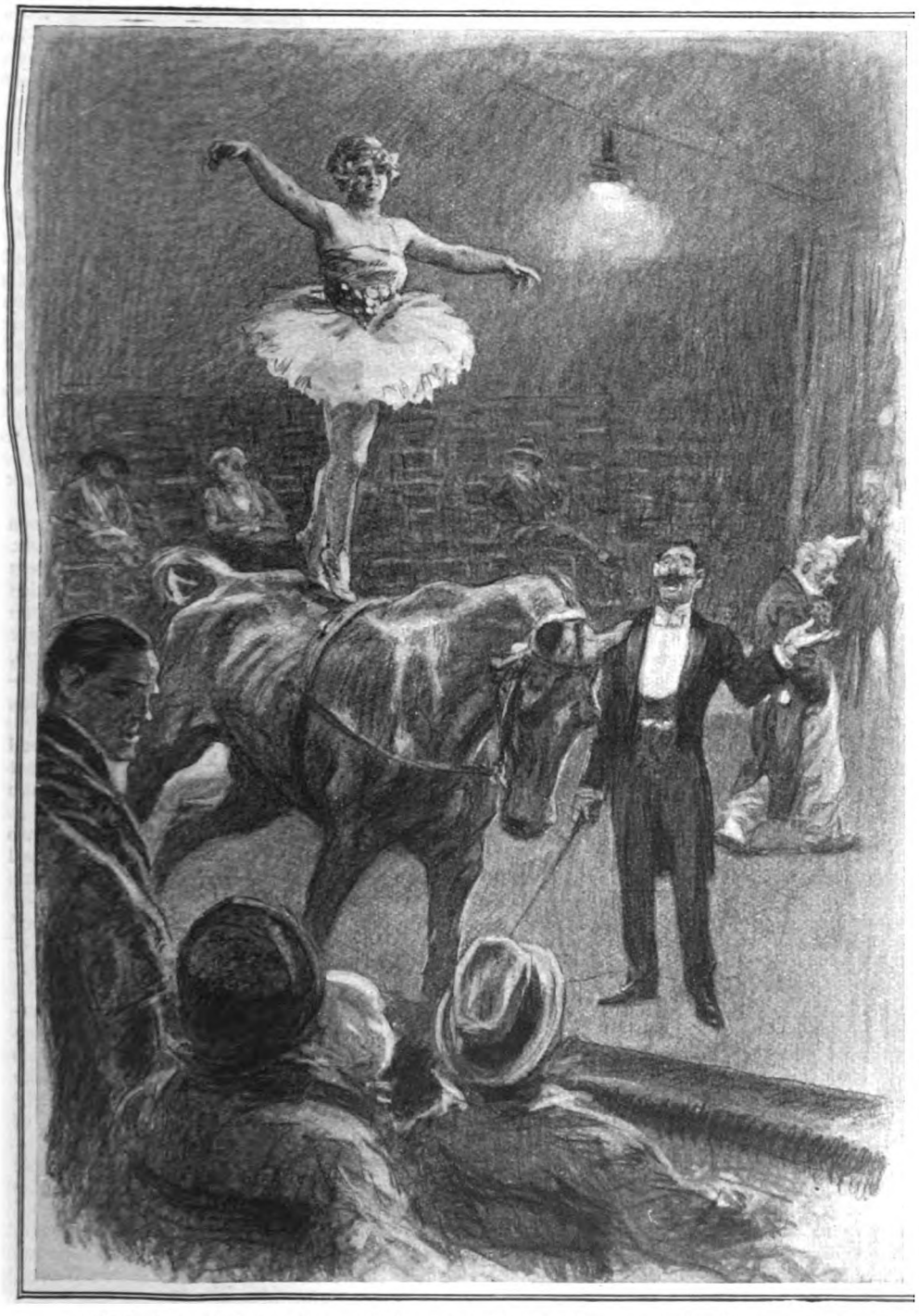
BUT Squeak's sentiments never reached completion, for suddenly, strangely, terribly—while Bogo's hand was yet at the curtains and Bogo's eye not yet focused on the world without—a sound, a weird and an ominous sound, a sound blent of petrol-gas in agony and machinery in torment, burst gunfirewise on the ears of that assembled company. And even before the meaning, the one and only meaning, of that sound had made itself clear to their petrified comprehension, Bogo—turning from his peephole—shouted: "'E's doing the dirty on us. So 'elp me Gawd, 'e's doing it on us in the old tin Lizzie"; and flung himself at the door-handle.

But though the door-handle turned, the door would not open.

Followed a second's frozen speechlessness—then panic—then pandemonium. They were no longer a company—they were a mob, a mob mad for their money. They were all stamping—stamping and shouting at the top of their voices. "Binjamin!" they shouted. "Hi, Binjamin—you young sugarer—come and open this ruddy door!" The tea-table heeled sideways; crashed. The brown pot exploded to fragments on the littered floor. "Binjamin!" they shouted, stamping on those fragments. "Hi-hi, Binjamin!" The property-wagon began to rock. To and fro it rocked—terrifying the women, maddening the men. "You'll 'ave it over," screamed Goldylocks. "You'll 'ave it over. We'll all be killed." "'Oo cares?" screamed back Pip and Squeak. "'Oo the 'ell cares? We've gotter get out. We've gotter get at 'im. Binjamin! Hi, Binjamin!"

But no Binjamin came; and always, louder than their screaming, rose that other sound—the agonized sound of a Ford starting under protest. Till at last the Ford protested no longer, and they knew—as a man from the wars knows machine-gun fire in nightmare—that it was chugging, chugging away.

Then, and then only, did the pandemonium in the property-wagon subside; then and then only did Binjamin, the sixpence of the absconder's giving still warm in his breech-pocket, unbolt the brass bar which the Great Herbert, creeping silent on them while they feasted, had shot across the



"Be'old," cried the Great Herbert, "be'old the Queen of the Ring, and the largest 'orse ever foaled."

property-wagon door and give them full view of disaster.

The Great Herbert was well away—and their salaries with him. Beaver Belinda, tumbling last down the wagon steps, saw the ill-hooded Ford—already a fair five hundred yards beyond the smokeless traction engine—gather speed down a slope of the road, hesitate at slope-bottom, and climb slow but remorseless towards the rain-blurred horizon. "Shot!" muttered Beaver Belinda. "Shot! That's what we are. Shot in the tails like garden-thrushes."

The rest of the company didn't even mutter. For a full half-minute they might have been statues—marble-faced statues whose hands pointed to the distant sky-line. For a full half-minute the suddenness of catastrophe muted even the mouth of Goldylocks.

But at last, bitterly voicing the rage of them all, Goldylocks spoke. "If you'd 'a' done wot I told you, Loony," said she in her bitterness, "if you'd 'a' stood up to 'im like a man this morning, that there excremental tripe-spot wouldn't 'a' been 'oppin' it wiv our brass. Go arter 'im, Loony. Go arter 'im on a horse! Go arter 'im on a bike! Go arter 'im on yer poor flat buniony feet! But go arter 'im some'ow, go arter 'im now this minute—or never more call yerself 'usband of mine."

Now, if—this time to borrow not from the older but from more modern chroniclers—there is "one moment in each man's life" when he "realizes himself," when "his very soul is uplifted" and "every fibre in him thrills to exultant manhood," of a surety such a moment came on Bogo the Clown as he listened to those words, those harsh and bitter words of his Goldylocks. For, listening, he did not—as was his custom—cringe before her; neither thereafter did he—as was his custom when he had done with listening—argue. He just fled—fled like the proverbial arrow—fled for the show marquee. And as he fled he shouted, shouted back over his flying shoulder, "Binjamin! Binjamin! Come 'elp me saddle an 'orse."

VI.

THEY saddled him the Monster, all six of them—and it was an execrable saddling. The stiff girths chafed Monster's belly; the rusty bit tasted like a foul electuary in his mouth. But Monster gave never a kick; and Monster's jockey made never a protest. "Get on with it," grunted Monster's jockey. "Get on with it—and get 'im outside."

They got him outside—Binjamin heaving away the sodden canvas to make a passage. They hoisted the be-trousered, be-sweatered Bogo to his back. They waited, all six of them, for an endless thirty seconds while Bogo fiddled with his leathers, fiddled his feet home into the irons. "You'll never catch 'im," said Beaver Belinda. "'E's out of sight already."

But Bogo only barked, "Give us a whip! Somebody give us a whip," and, the whip having been given, "'E'll make for Diddlehill Junction. Ten miles if it's an hinch. Let go 'is 'ead, Binjamin. Binjamin, you bastard, let go 'is 'ead."

The half-witted stable-boy loosed hands from the reins; and for the fraction of a moment Monster, puzzled by the unwonted proceedings, dropped his muzzle for a graze. In that fraction of a second Bogo's eyes met the eyes of his wife. And "Never no more" thought Bogo the Clown, "never no more—if the boss has the price of two fares on 'im." Then he bunched the reins between his fingers and smote—smote deliberate at the yellow horse's toast-rack ribs.

Once Bogo smote—and the yellow horse's head lifted wearily from the nibbled grasses. Twice Bogo smote—and the yellow horse's neck arched wearily to the curb-tug. Thrice Bogo smote—and the yellow horse, as one suddenly understanding, sprang forthright to a canter. "Good-byee," thought Bogo, cantering past the smokeless traction-engine; "good-byee for ever, Goldylocks, Queen of the Ring."

It surprised him, as Monster gathered speed down the squelching high road, that this crisis, so totally unexpected, should have brought him to so desperate a decision. It awed him, as Monster slowed to an amble up the long, long slope which the Ford had climbed before them, to realize that he was free.

For he *was* free—free as the untamed moorland which swept, mile upon mile of unbroken mystery, to left and to right of him. Oh, yes, he was free, free as the scudding rain-clouds—free as the hoof-startled grouse-coveys that rose wing-whistling from the heather. Turning in his saddle as Monster topped the slope, he could scarcely see the circus-tents; scarcely see the slate-roofed grey-stone cottages of Diddlehill-cum-Hardy.

All that lay behind him. With one swift razor-stroke of fortitude he had severed the hair, the insolent golden hair, which bound him to circus-servitude. Exulting, he found words for his exultation. "We've 'opped it," exulted Bogo. "We've 'opped it at last. You and me, old rum 'un. You and me. Put upon with 'er tongue, put upon with 'er whip, we've 'opped it—we've 'opped it together."

And with that, it seemed as though a

little of his rider's exultation entered sudden into the mind of the horse. For now, the up-slope behind him, Monster's ears began to twitch ; and now, the down-slope aiding, he broke from trot to canter ; and now, the wind of the open moorland in his nostrils, his great hocks hurled him from uneasy canter to uneasier gallop ; and now, a gleam of sunshine breaking watery through the rain-clouds, his rider saw—a mile and a mile and a mile to windward, where the grey road twisted level between the stone-walled heathers—the black, ill-hooded shape of Herbert Hanks's Ford. And, " Catch 'im, old sugarer," shouted Bogo, smiting with the whip-handle ; " catch 'im, for the love o' Moses and the price of a fare."

But though, for a mile and a mile and yet another mile, Monster held the Ford—held it till the stiff girths galled his galloping sides and the torn saddle-lining galled his galloping withers—held it till his ears dripped and his nostrils blew and the musty hay was lead in his belly—he might not gain on it. Gradually—so gradually that it seemed to Bogo, wearier than his horse, as if all the eternities had leagued themselves to defeat him—the black, ill-hooded shape dwindled, dwindled, and dwindled away towards that far faint smoke-blur which was Diddlehill Junction.

Soon the ill-hooded shape had altogether vanished. Soon the water-gleam of sunshine went out from the skies. Soon Monster's gallop slackened once more to canter. Soon they were ambling—ambling dead-beat through the renewing rain-drizzle along a road endless as endless Time.

" Yet surely," thought Bogo the Clown, " surely—even if I miss 'im—I'm free."

VII.

" ALL reet," said John Lumb. " All reet. Ah'll take tha word it's not stolen. But twenty pound is all Ah'll give tha for it. 'Tis ten year old if 'tis a day ; tha engine won't turn, and tha tyres are worth nowt."

" Cash ? "

" Cash if tha needs it, lad."

" Right. Only hand it over quick. I've got a train to catch."

The Great Herbert Hanks lifted his suit-case out of the smoking Ford ; waited, one eye on the Junction clock, while the car-dealer dived back into his oily den ; counted over his notes—and disappeared across the slippery cobbles.

Thought John Lumb, scratching his bullet head : " It's no bargain. Ah'll be lucky if I see ma brass back." Then—a habit of his—he walked across to the station ; watched the train puff in ; inquired at the Goods Office, " Anything for t' garage, Frank ? " ; heard there was " nowt in " ; and returned to contemplate his new purchase.

The purchase still stood where he had left it—a muddy caricature of a car that shocked his tidy soul. But now, beside the car, stood two other caricatures—the caricature of a horse and the caricature (for so the be-sweatered, be-trousered clown seemed to the Yorkshireman) of a stool-ball player. The horse's head was down ; but the stool-ball player's was up. He appeared, to the Yorkshireman, " a tough sort of cove " ; and from his language a foreigner.

" This 'ere car," began the foreigner, " ain't yours. It's 'Erbert 'Anks'. Where's 'Erbert 'Anks ? That's what I want to know."

" T' car *is* mine," retorted the laconic Lumb. " Ah dunno nowt about any 'Anks."

They looked at one another—silently, hostilely. About them, for the rain had cleared and it was the habit of others besides the car-dealer to watch the train in, foregathered the embryo of a crowd. " What's all about ? " queried the crowd ; and the " foreigner " told them—told them in a dialect they scarcely understood.

" It's 'Anks," said the foreigner, " 'Anks I'm a-lookin' for. 'As anybody 'ere seen 'Anks ? "

At last, slowly, comprehension dawned on the mind of John Lumb. " T' chap as sold me t' car," vouchsafed he, " caught t' train to Leeds."

" Gawblimey ! " ejaculated Bogo the Clown ; and again, " Gawblimey ! That's tore it."

The embryonic crowd—for already the Junction clock pointed the hour of the opening pub—drifted away, leaving him alone with the weary horse and the broken-down car and the speculative car-dealer. He tried to tell the car-dealer the whole story—but half-way through it words failed him. He wanted a drink—a drink of strong liquor at yon inn, whose lights, suddenly outshining, made two radiant pools on the cobblestones. But he had no money, no single copper-piece of money. That much he managed to tell John Lumb in full.

And John Lumb listened—listened, if not with eagerness, at least with attention.

" If Ah was in tha place, lad," said John Lumb, finally, " I'd sell tha horse."

" But 'oo'd buy 'im ? " A gleam, a gleam of miraculous hope, irradiated the clown's mud-bespattered features. So he could still make his bid—one last horse-coping bid—for freedom !

" Happen "—the Yorkshireman scratched

a reflective head—" happen Ah'd buy 'un myself. Not that Ah wants horses. But Ah've a friend, a farmer."

" 'Ow much ? " Now the gleam of hope was a blaze—a great blaze of pub-lights across Bogo's darkling skies.

" Five pun. With t' 'arness."

" Make it seven, cockie."

" Nah. Five pun."

" Six ? "

" Nah. Five. With t' 'arness."

For a moment, Bogo the Clown, who was Loony Harris in private life, gentled the Monster. The Monster was a pal—his only pal in a harsh and an insolvent world. The Monster had done his best—his weary best. Ten miles of it ! Ten terrible hard, high road miles !

" If I sells 'im," burst out Bogo, abruptly voicing his thoughts, " if I sells 'im for five quid, you'll 'ave to promise me that this 'ere friend of yours'll be kind to 'im. That 'e'll 'ave a bit of corn now and again. That 'e'll 'ave a roof over 'is 'ead, and a bit of litter to lie on. 'E's a good 'orse—even though 'e is thin. Yuss—'e's a Christian is the old Monster ; an' I won't part with 'im—be damned if I'll part with 'im—unless you can guarantee 'e'll be treated as such."

Whereupon John Lumb, with one scornful glance at the huge, shivering, sweat-sodden animal, retorted in broadest Yorkshire : " Ba goom, lad, if any nag in t' West Riding looked like yon 'un, Ah guess us'd horsewhip t' man what owned 'un "—and once more dived back into his oily den for " t' brass."

VIII.

THE deal, the miraculous deal for freedom, had been done a good two hours. In another sixty minutes the train, the wonderful London train, would arrive at Diddlehill Junction. " I mustn't miss it," thought Loony Harris, who was no longer Bogo the Clown. " Whatever happens, I mustn't miss it."

He ordered himself yet another glass of " Old Tom," and gazed pensive about the empty bar. How good the gin tasted ! How good it was to be free—free for ever from the nagging of Goldylocks ! And yet—freedom could be lonely. One ought to have a pal—a pal to yarn with.

" Mustn't miss that train," repeated thought, as Mr. Loony Harris, rising unsteadily to his feet, made his way through the swing-doors of the Goat and Compasses.

The rain-clouds had cleared themselves away. A moon, a high and a dithery moon, shone bright over Junction Square. " I'm shicker," mused Harris. " Shicker as a sailor on a spree." Shicker or sober, though, he had three pounds—three glorious pounds, fist-clenched in the pocket of his trousers. And the ticket to London cost only two—two miserable paper pounds. That would leave him——

He sat him down on the station-steps and, gazing wearily moonwards, wrestled with the higher mathematics. The moon was silver ; but a pound—a pound was gold. At least—it used to be gold. Now it was only paper. Two paper pounds from three gold pounds left—one gold pound. At least, it ought to be gold. But it wasn't gold. It was only paper. Paper ! What the 'ell could one buy with paper ? To buy things, tickets for instance, one must have gold. Gold !

" Gotter get gold," muttered Loony Harris, rising abruptly to his feet. " Some'ow gotter get gold. No gold, no tickets. That's sense—that's ruddy common sense."

But there was no gold—only paper—in his clenched fist. There was no gold—no gold anywhere. Except——

And then suddenly, to Loony Harris standing there all alone in Junction Square, came a vision—a glorious shimmering vision—a vision as of a gold-haired angel. He tried to put the vision away ; he tried to say to himself : " That ain't no angel. That's Mildred. I ain't going back to Mildred. I'm going to town."

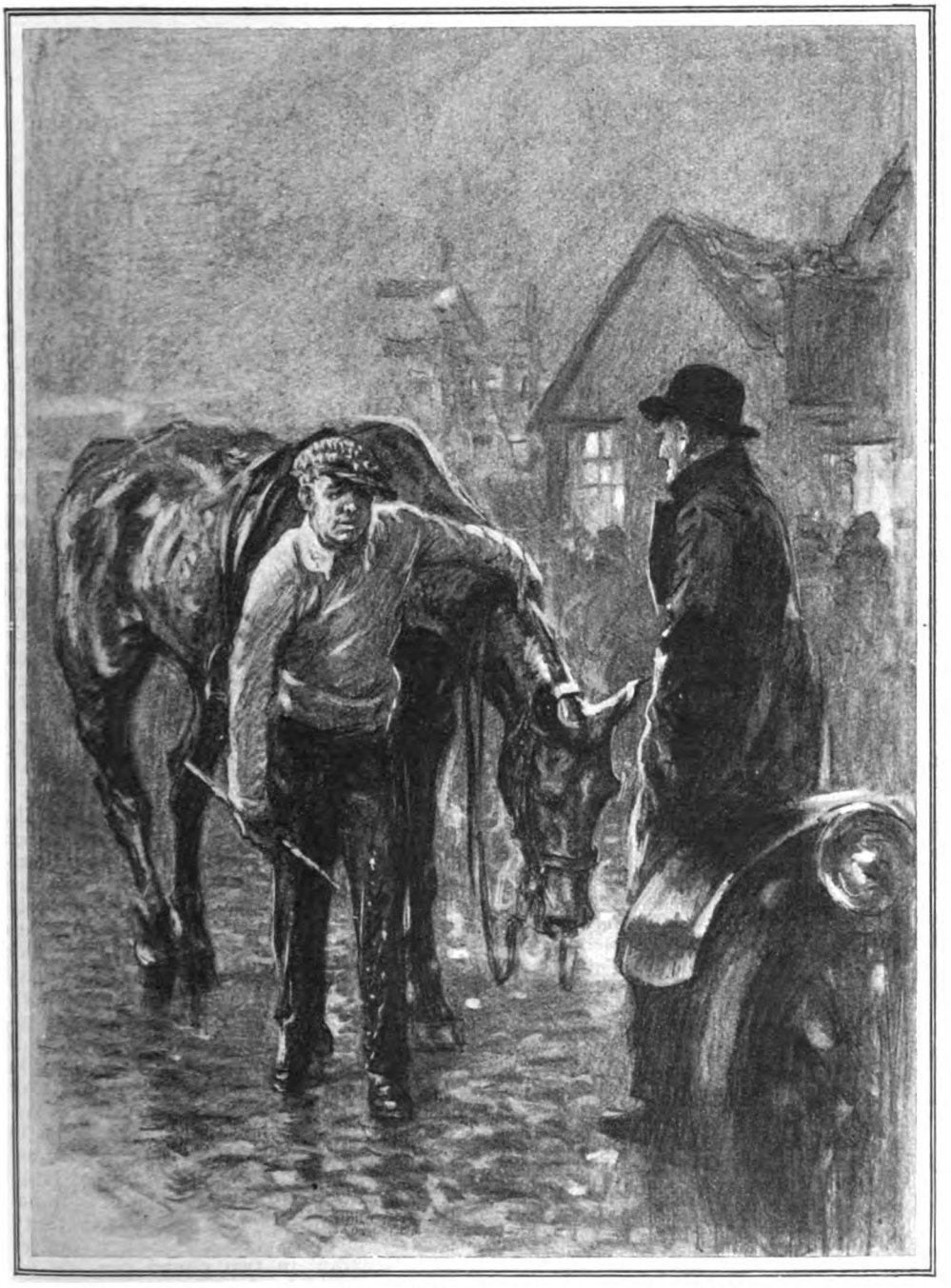
But the vision persisted. The vision spoke. " You ain't going to no town," said the vision.

He wrestled with the vision—or so it seemed to his fuddled mind—for many hours. Wrestling, he heard the sound of wheels, voices, the puff-puff-puff of a train. Then he felt himself falling—falling down and down into a gin-rocked darkness where dwelt neither gold nor paper nor any hope for the likes of Bogo.

THE moon was still shining when he emerged from that gin-rocked darkness, and for a long while he lay where he had fallen, blinking up at it through half-closed eyelids. At last, blinking still, he rose to his feet. Somewhere above his head a clock was chiming. " One," chimed the clock. " One—two—three—four."

He knew that he had got tight, that he had missed his train. He felt in his trouser-pockets, felt the three notes still in their place. " Thank Gawd for that," he muttered.

Then, deliberately, he turned his back on the station and shambled away. " Ten miles," he muttered, shambling. " Ten miles to Diddlehill-cum-Hardy. It's a long way—a 'ell of a long way. But visions is visions. An' I've gotter go back. Yuss—



"If I sells 'im for five quid, you'll 'ave to promise me that this 'ere friend of yours'll be kind to 'im. 'E's a good 'orse—even though 'e is thin."

hinsults or no hinsults, I've gotter go back to Goldylocks."

For beauty—in deference to Mustard-Pot's newly-acquired snobbery I correct a previous misquotation for my moral—draws even Bogos with a *single* hair.

A TALE OF A TINKER

by

LYNN DOYLE

ILLUSTRATED BY ALFRED LEETE

AS every intelligent Irishman knows, there's a close connection between porther an' hard work. A man that's workin' with his hands, an' sweatin', as he's bound to do if he works at all, 'll need moisture of some kind or another, an' if there's a pleasanter way of administherin' it than through the neck of a porther bottle the secret hasn't leaked out—in Ireland, anyway.

But whisky is no dhrink for the labourin' man. Whisky catches you about the head mostly. It takes a man of brains an' education to dhrink whisky and keep out of the hands of the police. Solicithors an' docthors, an' bank clerks, an' them class of people can dhrink a deal of whisky an' still keep brave an' respectable-lookin' except about the nose; an' whenever they want to make their wives miserable they can do it in a educated sort of a way; but the more ignoranter people, when they get a glass or two, can think of nothin' betther nor their two fists for the job, an' very soon finds themselves at the Petty Sessions.

That was how it was with Lanty Rogan the tinker. There's no doubt Lanty was a regular professor at the tinkerin'—any brains the Almighty had bestowed on him was in his two hands—an' for a tinker he worked very industhrious. As long as Lanty stuck to the porther he was as merry as a cricket, an' as pleasant as the flowers in May to everybody, except the ass, maybe; but all the bad boiled out on him whenever he took to whisky.

He always took a terrible scunner at the ass when he had porther in him, but was very fond of the wife; but when he got a feed of whisky he hated the very look of her, an' loved the ass like a brother. As soon as he begun on the whisky he started to sing. The more whisky he had in him the louder he sang, an' when the wife could hear the singin' of Lanty above the rattle of the ass's cart as he come down the road, she always reached for her shawl an' took off across the fields to her mother's.

But she wasn't always out of the house in time, an' whenever that'd happen, an' Lanty'd get his hands on her, he'd give her a sore lambastin', just to learn her that she might 'a had more sense than to marry a man with no head for whisky.

This sort of thing went on for a long while. The wife was a quiet, loyal, wee body, took the rough with the smooth, an' never complained; an' none of the neighbours liked to intherfere; the weemin sayin' she deserved all she got for puttin' up with it so peaceable, an' the men thinkin' at the back of their heads that they might want to give their own wives a lick some time or another. But as time went on the thing began to get serious, an' people began to see that if somethin' wasn't done it would end in manslaughter; an' at last, one night after Lanty had give the wife a cruel doin'-over, Mrs. Jarvis made her man go an' inform to the polis. Lanty was fined ten shillin's; an' then that evenin' he went down an' broke all the front windows in Jarvis's cottage, an' was fined a pound an' had to pay thirty shillin's for the glass. There's a deal of kettle-mendin' in two pound ten, an' for about two months there was great peace an' concord in the Rogan family; but at the end of that time Lanty got a skinful of whisky at William Dempsey's wake an' come back an' broke all records on the poor wee woman. The polis was on the watch for him this time, an' he went down thirty

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shillin's an' costs. The next bout was forty shillin's or a month, an' the next afther that a month without the option.

It was all no good. He wasn't out of jail six weeks till he chased the wife two mile up the road with a soldherin' iron, an' would surely ha' been the death of her if she hadn't been runnin' straight an' him zigzag. People seen that jail wasn't goin' to meet the case at all. It wore off just as quick as a fine, an' besides, when he was in there was no money bein made, an' the wife was half-starved. Everybody was at their wits' end what to do, from the P.P. to the Resident Magistrate, an' the only end they could see to the business was for Lanty to kill the wife clean out, an' then be hanged an' done with.

But just about the time people had come to that opinion, the ass fetched Lanty home one evenin' by-ordinary full. He couldn't sing, itself, an' even forgot about the wife; an' just lay there with his head in a tin can an' kicked kettles into the road. Afther a while he gathered himself together a bit an' slid down off the cart an' kissed the ass an' staggered into the house; an' afther fallin' down the stairs twice he climbed up them an' fell asleep in the bed in his clothes.

A few of the neighbours had been lookin' at his antics from a respectful distance, an' followed him in just to see what he would do. The wife, I may tell ye, was a mile an' a half away by this time. As luck would have it, the rector's son was home in Ballygullion on his vacation. A very antic lad he was, too, a medical student, an' never likely to be anythin' else. He seen the wee crowd goin' into Lanty's, an' followed them upstairs, an' as he stood there lookin' at him a notion come intil his head.

"Pat," sez he to me—I was about his own age, an' he knowed me well—"fetch one or two of the boys downstairs an' we'll arrange a wee surprise for Mr. Rogan when he wakes."

So downstairs three or four of us went, an' young Mr. Donaldson took command.

First of all we unyoked the ass, an' then we took out the linch-pins, an' pulled the two wheels off the axle.

He chased the wife two mile up the road with a soldherin' iron.

"Now," sez he, "carry the body of the cart upstairs—you can do it if you turn it sideways—an' then fetch up the wheels an' put them on again." So we done that. I don't suppose anybody had ever seen a donkey-cart in an upstairs room before; an' it looked very queer.

"That'll surprise him sure enough," sez I. "I'd like to see his face when he wakes."

"Take your time," sez Masther Bob. "We have to bring the ass up yet."

We looked at him to see was he serious—an' he was. So we tied the ass's legs together, an' carried him up, with no harm done barrin' two front teeth that Joe Walsh lost through forgettin' that he was at the kickin' end—but it's not a job I'd like to undhertake again. Then with a deal of coaxin' an' squeezin' we got the ass between the shafts, an' harnessed him, with his head towards the bed; and then we stood in the doorway an' laughed till we cried.

Ye've maybe seen one of them conthrivances of a full-rigged ship inside of a glass bottle. When I was a child it used to be a sore puzzle to me how the ship got in; but a grown man would ha' been puzzled to guess how that ass and cart got into Lanty Rogan's upstairs bedroom.

Even ourselves that done the business could hardly think how it was done, it was that impossible-lookin'. But the ass wasn't a bit put about, an' started to eat the straw out of the bed-tick as composed as if it was used to bein' put to bed every night an' sung to sleep.

"Come on downstairs, boys," sez Masther Bob. "He'll do no harm. I suppose we'd betther wait about till Lanty comes-to?"

"Wait!" sez Billy Lenahan. "I wouldn't miss it if I should sit up all night."

So we lit our pipes an' sat down by the kitchen fire.

In about an hour's time we heard a bit of a stir upstairs, an' a groan or two.

"He's comin' round," sez Masther Bob, an' tiptoes up the stairs, wi' the rest of us afther him. When we keeked in, the ass had ate all of the stuffin' of the tick he could get at, an' part of the quilt, an' was nosin' at Lanty's face.

an' Lanty gruntin' an' thryin' to brush him off as if he was a fly. Presently the ass begins lippin' at Lanty's hair, an' at last he puts his teeth to it an' takes a good tug, an' with that Lanty throws out his closed fist an' pins the ass on the nose. Back goes the ass with a jerk, an' shoves one of the trams of the cart out through the window with a powerful crash; an' at that Lanty starts up in the bed an' looks round him. He took a stupid stare at the ass, an' then reached for the reins an' give a great tug at them.

"Come out of the ditch, ye brute ye!" sez he. "How the divil did ye get down there?" An' then he raised himself on his elbow an' looked round him. For a minute or two he lay there blinkin', with his eyes slowly thravellin' from one thing in the room to another, an' from that to the ass an' cart; an' then all at once the whole thing came home to him. He let one screech out of him an' rolled off the bed on the far side of it from the ass, an' in undher it like a rabbit, an' lay there on his mouth an' nose roarin' like a fog-horn in a sea-mist.

With that we all begun to push into the room, an' Masther Bob climbed over the cart an' thrailed Lanty out from undher the bed.

"What's wrong, Lanty? sez he. "In the name of goodness what's wrong?"

"Oh, Masther Bob," sez he, clingin' tight to him, "it's the divil, it's the divil. He has followed me home an' fetched up the ass an' cart for me. Run for the priest," sez he. "Run for Father Connolly, or one of the curates—or even your father would do at a pinch, if you can't get them. Oh, Lord deliver us!" An' he fell to the prayin' an' cryin' time about.

"Away for Father Connolly, somebody," sez I—for I didn't want to miss the fun. "There never was a betther chance of gettin' the pledge on him."

So off goes young Tommy McGorrian, an' the rest of us stood there listenin' to Lanty. He was soberin' every minit, an' the soberer he got the frighteneder he got, till at the last one of us had to go over an' help Masther Bob to hold him in the room.

Presently we heard a noise below.

"Here's Father Connolly," sez I. But it wasn't. It was the sergeant of police. We could hear the big boomin' voice of him.

"An' he thinks the ass an' cart is up in the bedroom with him, an' it an upstairs room. Did ye ever hear such blethers? It's the horrors of dhrink is on the man."

"I wouldn't be surprised," we could hear Billy answerin'—the rascal. "Ye'd betther go up an' reason with him, sergeant."

"I will, then," sez the sergeant, very determined; an' up the stairs he marches, with every step of him shakin' the house.

But when he walked into the room an' seen the ass an' cart there sure enough, there wasn't much to choose between him an' Lanty as far as bein' scared went. For though he was a big man an' plucky enough with a thramp or a dhrunk an' disordherly, he was very superstitious an' cowardly at night time, an' wouldn't ha' gone

So we tied the ass's legs together, an' carried him up.

out afther dark without a couple of constables with him, not if he was to get his pension doubled.

However, seein' the eyes of everybody on him, he pulled himself together an' looked over very wicked at Lanty.

"How did this yoke get here, Rogan?" sez he.

"It was the divil done it, sergeant dear," sez Lanty, with his teeth chatterin'. "The last thing I mind was myself an' the ass comin' down the hill below Pat Devlin's, an' all at once there come a terrible clatther like all the tin cans in the world fallin' about us, an' in the clappin' of your hands I was lyin' on my bed here, an' the ass eatin' the hair of my head as if it was turnip-tops. Send for Father Connolly," sez he. "for it's touch an' go with my sowl this minit."

"It mightn't be any harm," sez the sergeant, crossin' himself on the quiet, "if one of yez did go for him. An' in the meantime I'll hold a bit of an investigation. Had ye dhrink taken at the time this happened, Rogan?" sez he, fetchin' out his notebook.

"Well, I might have had a couple of spoonfuls of whisky, sergeant," sez Lanty; "but sure the ass was as sober as you are, an' he's here too."

"He is, he is," sez the sergeant, "an' the question is how the divil—Lord pardon me," sez he—"I mean how did he get here? Lend me your two-foot rule, Joe Davison. For we must thry all natural means of inquiry before the case passes out of the hands of the civil authorities."

So he run the two-foot rule over the door an' over the cart, all of us lookin' on very solemn.

"'The dimensions of the cart,'" sez he to himself, writin' all the time in his notebook, "'rendhered it impossible for it to pass through the doorway. I then proceeded to measure the window.'"

"You need hardly bother doin' that, sergeant," sez Masther Bob. "We can see for ourselves that the donkey wouldn't go through it, let alone the cart."

"As an officer of the Force," sez the sergeant, "I must pursue the investigation in a legal an' proper way, Mr. Donaldson. 'I then proceeded to measure the window, one pane of which appeared to have been recently broken.' Can you explain the breakage, Rogan?"

"I cannot, sergeant," sez Lanty. "It was as whole as the bottom of a new kettle when I left home this mornin'. But sure you couldn't get the ass's tail through the hole, not to speak of his body. It was never through the window he came."

"The breakin' of the window I would regard as immaterial," sez the sergeant, "for three times the size of the window wouldn't admit the cart. Is there any other orifice in the room?"

"Only the chimney," sez Masther Bob. For some of us wasn't quite sure what the sergeant was dhrivin' at. "Examine it carefully, sergeant," sez he. "I've heard of the divil ridin' down a chimney on a broomstick before now."

The ass had ate all of the stuffin' of the tick he could get at, an' was nosin' at Lanty's face.

"He might do that in the present case," sez the sergeant, peerin' up the chimney; "but nobody less than himself could ha' dhriven an ass an' cart down here. 'The size of the chimney,' sez the sergeant, at the notebook again, 'which did not appear to have been swept for a considerable time——'"

"An' that's the God's truth, anyway," sez Peter the sweep. "I haven't taken eighteenpence out of the house since the year before Lanty's father died. As far as I'm concerned the divil may get him any time."

"Ah Lord forgive ye for them words, Pether," sez Lanty, half cryin'. "Isn't my sowl in a bad enough way as it is? Will some of yez go an' hurry up Father Connolly?"

"There he is," sez somebody. "That's his step on the stairs." But when we looked

it was ould McSwiney, the schoolmasther from Tullydrum.

" There'll be fun now," sez I to myself. An' I could see by Masther Bob's face that he was very much of the same opinion.

Ould McSwiney had come down from the mountains when he was a lump of a fellow, an' was a native Irish speaker, an' a great man for ould times an' ould stories. If ye once got him started—an' was in no great hurry home—he'd ha' deaved ye with yarns about fairies an' will-o'-the-wisps, an' leprechauns, an' them sort of bein's. He didn't believe in the English divil at all, but had rooted out a deal of information about another ould Gaelic chap that he thought was twice as good; though, troth, if it come to spendin' the balance of eternity with either of the two there wasn't much to choose between them.

When the story of Lanty an' the ass was explained to him he was in great heart.

" Fairies," sez he, clappin' his hands; " by the Hokey, fairies. I never heard of a clearer case. There's a story in The Annals as like this as two peas."

" Fairies ! " sez the sergeant, curlin' his upper lip till it near pushed the helmet off his head.

" Aye, fairies," sez McSwiney. " Where did you hear the noise, Lanty ?—There you are now ! There's a fairy ring not half a mile from that."

" Did ye ever see a fairy ? " sez the sergeant.

" I did not," sez McSwiney, " not that I was sure of. But my father was the seventh son of a seventh son, an' he seen plenty of them.

" Ye don't believe that ? " sez he to the sergeant.

" No, nor I wouldn't believe it if he was the seventh son of Lord Ross's telescope at Birr," sez the sergeant. " Was your father a teetotaller ? " sez he.

" I wouldn't say he was," sez McSwiney. " What are ye thryin' to make out ? "

" Oh, nothin'," sez the sergeant. " But we had a dhrunk man in the lock-up not a fortnight ago that seen two sea-serpents an' a talkin' frog. Will ye tell me what would the fairies—if there *is* fairies—be botherin' themselves about this unfortunate bein' for ? "

" That's just it," sez McSwiney. " That's what proves my case up to the hilt. For it's well known—to any knowledgeable an' educated man—that it's just such an exthraordinary bit of rascality as this that they would put their hands to. They're full of tricks an' divilment, the fairies. There's no reason with them at all."

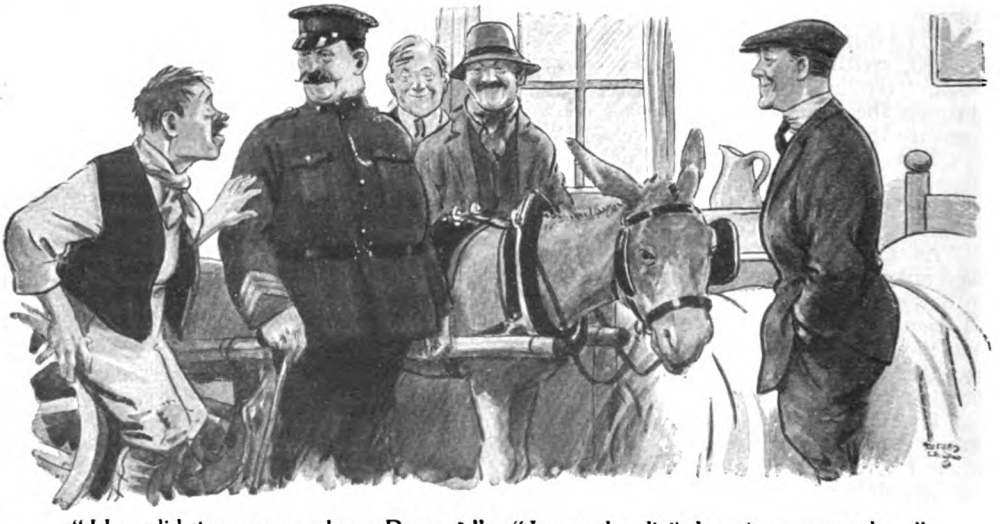
" I'm with you there," sez the sergeant, very dhry, " nor with them that believes in them."

" Well, if it wasn't the fairies," sez McSwiney in a rage, " who was it, then ? "

" Afther a careful investigation of all reasonable explanations of the occurrence," sez the sergeant, " I have come to the conclusion that the divil is mixed up in it."

" You're a poor superstitious creature, for all your three stripes, sergeant," sez McSwiney. " Why should the divil bother with Lanty Rogan, when he's sure to get him anyway ? "

" He mightn't be willin' to wait for him," sez the sergeant. " I mind my grandmother—rest her soul—tellin' me——"



" How did this yoke get here, Rogan ? " " It was the divil done it, sergeant dear."

Poor Lanty had been listenin' to the whole conversation, an' had been greatly cheered up in his mind to hear that it was maybe only the fairies he had to deal with, but at this he give way altogether, an' fell forrard on the bed, cryin' an' roarin' for the parish priest—an' with that we heard Father Connolly's voice on the stairs, an' more along with him. The next minit he pushed his way into the room, an' in afther him comes Lanty's wife an' his mother-in-law. It seems the news of Lanty's mishap had reached beyond their length already.

When the wife seen the ass an' cart she started the roarin' an' cryin' too, an' made to go over to Lanty. But the mother-in-law let a skreigh out of her an' fell on her knees.

"It's a miracle!" sez she. "It's a blessed miracle has fell from heaven to warn that dirty scallywag from his murdherin' ways an' give him one more chance before the divil gets him. Get down on your knees, ye miserable wee scut, an' thank God an' the saints for what they've done for you this day, warnin' ye from your dhrink an' your wickedness; an' then get up an' take the pledge with Father John here, an' save your useless sowl while ye have a chance. It's a miracle has been performed in Ballygullion this day; your reverence will tell him that."

Father Connolly pushed his way into the room, an' in afther him comes Lanty's wife an' his mother-in-law.

Father Connolly looked across the room at Masther Bob, an' there was just what ye would know of a twinkle in his eye.

"Well, Mary," sez he, "in the matther of miracles the Church is inclined to be very cautious, an' I wouldn't recommend anyone to jump to a rash conclusion; but if ye'll all leave me here alone with Lanty, I think I'll be able to convince him about the advisability of taking the pledge. Just go down, the whole of you, to the kitchen."

So I went out of the room. I took a keek over at Lanty, an' even with the scare that was on him it come into my head that Father John would have his work cut out. For by the look of the same Lanty it was no spring-water drouth was on him that minit.

We sat in the kitchen for a quarther of an hour or more, an' at the end of that time Father John came down lookin' very well plazed with himself.

"Mary," sez he, "do you an' your daughter go upstairs an' fetch Lanty away home with you. This house will be closed to-night, an' I think you'll find when you come back in the mornin' that the ass an' cart will be removed to their natural habitation.

He took a squint over at Masther Bob as he said it, an' Masther Bob just returned him a wee nod, with a wink thrown in.

"But, Father dear," sez the mother-in-law, "did he sign the pledge? For if ye let the ass an' cart off the premises till he does sign it, we're done for ever."

"He has taken the pledge again' whisky for the rest of his life," says Father Connolly; "an' he's a man of his word. About porter I've allowed him a little latitude."

"Oh, Father John, Father John," sez she, half-cryin', "why didn't ye pledge him again' porther too, when ye had this blessed chance?"

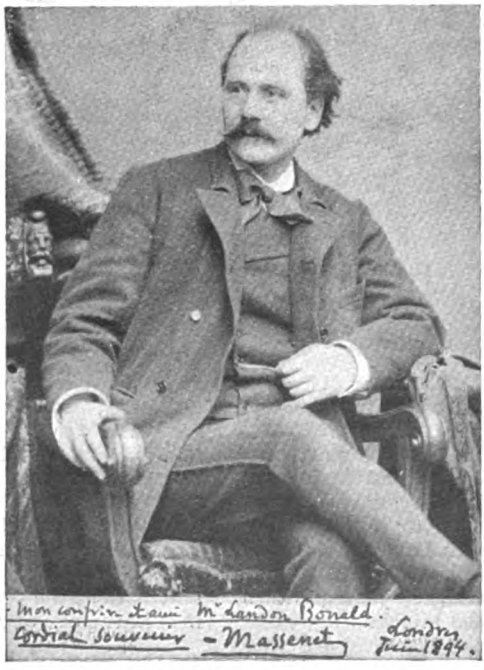
"Mary," sez Father Connolly, lookin' at her with a very wise wee smile on his mouth, "as I told you, I wouldn't commit myself about whether there was a miracle performed here this evenin' or not; but there's one thing I will tell you: I've been livin' in the parish of Ballygullion these twenty-two years past, an' I know far too much about the place to expect two miracles in it in the one day."

MORE VARIATIONS on a personal theme by SIR LANDON RONALD

I.—SOME MUSICIANS I HAVE KNOWN.

MASSENET.

HERE are a few impressions and sketches of all kinds of musicians whose acquaintanceship or friendship I have had. It was in 1894, when I was just twenty-one years old, that I first met Massenet, who was then considered one of the greatest living composers. He came over to Covent Garden Theatre to superintend the rehearsals of a one-act opera entitled "La Navarraise," which he had specially composed for Calvé, who was to create the title-*rôle*. My job had been to teach the music to the artistes who were taking part in the opera. A Belgian named Philip Flon was the conductor, and although we were "hail fellow well met" I don't think there was much love lost between us. I found Massenet so courteous, so polite, and so charming that I was actually embarrassed in his company. He was, however, very excitable at rehearsal. He would walk up and down in the stalls with his hands behind his back shouting at Flon every two minutes in an extremely high-pitched voice: "*Non, non, non, non, non! Ce n'est pas ça!*" The orchestra was stopped and Massenet would sing in a real composer's voice the alteration he desired. A few bars farther on once again "*Ce n'est pas ça*" would be shrieked out, until Flon, the orchestra, the singers, and everybody concerned were made so nervous and irritable that Augustus Harris was eventually sent for to pour oil on the troubled waters—which he accomplished with his usual success. I asked Massenet for a portrait, and he brought me one with the following inscription: "*A mon confrère et ami Mr. Landon Ronald. Cordial souvenir.—Massenet.*" It took me a long time to get over being called a "confrère and friend" of such a famous composer.



Massenet.

JEAN AND EDOUARD DE RESZKE.

It was in the same year that I first got to know those two superb artistes, Jean and Edouard de Reszke. "Jean," as he was affectionately called by all those who knew him well, was truly a delightful

man, and his great big brother Edouard was probably the best-natured operatic artist that ever lived. And what voices they had! Of course, Jean never had a big voice, but the timbre of it was like liquid gold and his personality was so dignified—he was such a gentleman on the stage—that to my mind his representations of parts such as Romeo, Lohengrin, Werther, and Tristan have never been equalled, and I doubt if they ever will be. His brother Edouard had a mighty bass voice, but he was never such a great artiste as Jean. Yet no one who can remember his Mephistopheles in Gounod's "Faust" will deny that it was a superb and memorable performance. Away from the theatre these two brothers were splendid company. I can recall many an evening spent with them and Lasalle (a great baritone) and Mancinelli (a great conductor) when they were all staying at the Hôtel Continental, at the extreme end of Regent Street, when Jean would literally double us all up by his imitations. He was one of the best mimics I have ever heard and had a genuine sense of humour.

Jean de Reszke.

Edouard de Reszke.

PADEREWSKI.

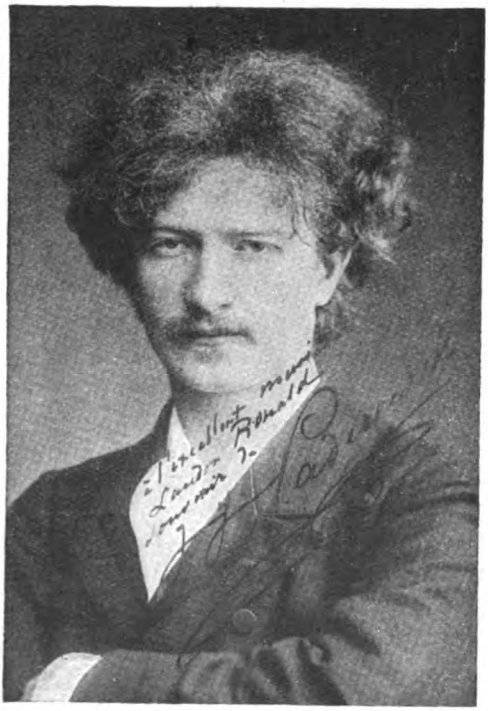
A man with an exceptionally strong personality is Paderewski. It is years and years since I saw him, but I used to meet him professionally a great deal. He was a man of infinite charm and was exceptionally encouraging and kind to me as a young man. Lord Northcliffe was one of his ardent admirers, and I remember an incident occurring at a *soirée* which Lord Northcliffe (then Sir Alfred Harmsworth) gave at his house in Berkeley Square which proves Paderewski's kindness of heart. I was the accompanist of the occasion and had met the great pianist several times during that and the previous season. I was playing a very difficult accompaniment, and when I had finished he came over to me and complimented me in the highest terms. He took my hands in his and looked at them. "You have excellent hands for a pianist," he said; "why don't you become a solo-pianist? Think it over, and if you decide to do so and you find yourself anywhere near where I live (he gave me his address) I shall be very pleased to help you." Needless to say, I was taken aback by such a wonderful opinion and offer and thanked him from my heart. The next morning, however, my secret ambition to become a conductor was once again all-conquering, the result being that I shall never

be able to style myself "A pupil of Paderewski." He was truly a great pianist. I heard his two predecessors—Liszt and Rubinstein (oddly enough, when I was eleven years old Liszt made exactly the same remark to me about my hands as Paderewski did several years later)—and I cannot pay Paderewski a greater compliment than by saying that he was a worthy successor of those two giants of the piano. We have to-day several great pianists. I need only mention such names as Hoffman, Bauer, Busoni, Cortot, Moiseiwitsch, Mark Hambourg, and many others equally famous, and yet I wonder if it can be truly said that any one of them has ever become such a household word as Paderewski was and is? I doubt it.

BUSONI.

Busoni I knew over twenty years ago. He had a beard and a moustache then; now he is clean-shaven—but he remains an immense personality. He has probably the biggest brain of any living instrumentalist. One may or may not admire his playing, but it must always be conceded that it is forceful, intellectual, and masterful. To my mind he is almost too clever. I have often wished in his interpretations for a little less intellect and a little more heart! He is extremely cordial and nice to his old friends, and he can be very witty—but there is often a sting in his humour. He has a most curious laugh. He doesn't laugh with you, but barks at you! He is a man who creates an atmosphere; wherever you might see him you would ask who he was. You feel that you are in the presence of a master.

I recollect an interesting incident which occurred many years ago when I was living in a small house not far from Paddington Station. My wife and I had asked Busoni and Baron Frederic d'Erlanger to a little dinner. For the benefit of those of my readers who may not know, I will explain that Frederic d'Erlanger is a composer and has produced and had performed a number of big works, such as the opera "Tess," various orchestral works and concertos, and many songs. He had an exceptional gift for extemporizing at the pianoforte on any theme given him. On the evening in question I asked Busoni after dinner to supply d'Erlanger with a theme so that he might give us a proof of his gift. Busoni refused somewhat like a spoilt child, adding that such things did not interest him. My wife pleaded with him, and rather ungraciously he went to the piano and struck in a haphazard fashion three notes, and with that curious laugh of his and a glint in his eye said to d'Erlanger, "See what you can do with that." D'Erlanger considered a minute or two, and sat down to the pianoforte and extemporized an extremely clever set of variations on the three given notes, much to the joy and astonishment of Busoni. At the conclusion he became most enthusiastic, and d'Erlanger, seizing the psychological moment, jumped up and said, "Now for my revenge! *You* make a fugue on these three notes," and he played the same three notes *backwards!* Busoni took up the challenge immediately, and without a moment's hesitation played off-hand a masterly four-part fugue ending with a grand chorale. Only a musician can really appreciate the uncanny cleverness of such a feat. We were quite overcome, and when he finished I remember I was trembling with excitement. I said I should never forget it, and I never have.



Paderewski.

SIR THOMAS BEECHAM.

Sir Thomas Beecham is credited with the reputation that he never keeps an appointment, never answers a letter, and is never to be found when wanted. During a long and valued friendship my personal experience of him has been that he missed only one appointment, and that through no fault of his; that he has always replied to my letters

either by writing, telephone, or wire; although I must admit that I have certainly found it difficult at times to discover his whereabouts! But one forgives so much in Beecham that one would never excuse in others. He is a law unto himself, and you must take or leave him as you find him. Personally I took him to my heart years ago, and he has still his place there. He is inclined to be supercilious and contemptuous, but underneath all this assumed indifference to other people's opinion of himself there beats a warm, generous heart capable of great sympathy and understanding. He is quite a short man, but never gives one that impression for a moment. He carries himself very erect and in no way looks like an artist or a musician. He has the keenest sense of humour and is a most amusing raconteur. Indeed, to hear him tell various tales and experiences he has had with operatic singers is a pure joy. I would gladly tell some, but I am informed that if a libel is true it still remains a libel, so I will leave it to him to publish his own stories.

Busoni.

I met him one day in 1915 by mere chance at Pagani's Restaurant just as he was finishing lunch. I sat down and had a long chat—a chat which I may say at once was eventually to prove a very costly one for us both, because it was on that occasion that we agreed to go into partnership and run a series of Promenade Concerts at the Albert Hall in June. The reason that we came to the conclusion that this would be a wise thing to do was that owing to the war there was no Covent Garden opera season, and we believed that people wanted somewhere to go and something to do in the evening. We had reckoned, however, without our enemies. We started off in great style on Saturday night, May 31st, each of us conducting alternate items, and there was a goodly audience to give us an enthusiastic greeting. We were quite pleased, and thought we had "struck ile." On Monday, June 2nd, London was favoured by the first visit of a Zeppelin. I forget whether bombs were actually dropped or whether any damage was done. I know that when Beecham and I met for lunch the following day I tried to persuade him that it didn't matter a bit, and he tried to make me believe that it would drive the people into the Albert Hall for the purpose of taking shelter as well as to listen to music! I don't know how many of my readers remember the year 1915, but I am quite sure I am right in asserting that not one person out of a dozen ever thought or imagined that such a thing as an air raid could take place. It caused more astonishment and curiosity than alarm, but it served its purpose as far as our Promenade Concerts went. People considered the Royal Albert Hall a large and convenient target for the Germans to hit, and preferred to keep to their own homes.

We continued bravely for a fortnight, when I found I had lost all the capital I had promised to contribute, so I suggested closing down. But Beecham wouldn't listen to it, and insisted on continuing. But he equally insisted, in spite of all my entreaties, that I should *not* contribute one penny more towards the expenses, and begged me to continue doing my share as conductor. To this eventually I agreed, though I thought it very foolhardy of him. We had no more visits from Zeppelins that month, but the

public did not take kindly to our scheme, and I fear it must be written down as a failure. Beecham and I, however, enjoyed every minute of it thoroughly. He has repeatedly said that he can look back at no single venture he has undertaken which was so consistently happy and pleasant as this one, and I heartily re-echo the sentiment.

We made one great mistake. We undertook to eliminate German music entirely. Imagine programme after programme without one work by Bach, Beethoven, Haydn, Mozart, Mendelssohn, Schumann, Brahms, and, above all, *Wagner!* We were asking for trouble, and we got it! But, I repeat, the whole season was a joy to us, and I never regret one thing in connection with it, excepting perhaps the fact that it will probably never be repeated.

SIR HUBERT PARRY.

Sir Hubert Parry, fine musician, great scholar, and the late Director of the Royal College of Music, was a typical specimen of a county squire. He was tall, good-looking, and had a ruddy complexion which so often belied his poor state of health. He was bluff and hearty in manner, and would slap you on the back and say, "Bless your heart!" at the smallest provocation. His big fat smile was a pleasure to see, and he always had a cheery word and a hearty greeting for everyone with whom he came in contact. There was no man more popular, more esteemed, and more broad-minded in the profession. This was proved when he was laid to rest in St. Paul's, the huge cathedral being crowded from floor to ceiling by those anxious to pay their last tribute to a truly great Englishman.

At the age of thirteen I was lucky enough to have him as my professor for composition. It was at the time that Sir George Grove was the Director of the Royal College of Music, and I was a student there. Dr. Parry—as he was then—was accorded a privilege which I do not believe has been granted to any other professor since—he was allowed to give his lessons at his home in Kensington Square. It was there that I used to go twice a week, and it was there that Dr. Parry became the hero of my boyhood days. He was so unlike any other professor I had ever had. So jolly, so good-tempered, so warm-hearted, and so exceptionally kind. He gave me my lesson in his library, and whilst examining the manuscripts I had brought him he would tell me to go and look at his books, and insist on me taking two or three home with me. He had a magnificent library, and it was owing to this kindly act that I was enabled to read books which I could not have afforded to buy. He never made any suggestion as to what I should read, but left it entirely to my own choice. In after years he told me how intensely amused he was when I marched off with Spencer's "Sociology" or Laing's "Modern Science and Modern Thought" instead of—as he had expected—"Monte Cristo" or "Vanity Fair." I explained to him that I could get sixpenny editions of Dumas, Thackeray, Dickens, and other great novelists, but that my pocket-money would not run to Spencer, Huxley, or Ruskin.

Long after I had left the Royal College of Music I kept in touch with Hubert Parry by letter, and he always replied and showed considerable interest in my doings. Once, when I was about twenty-two years old, I wrote him an acrimonious letter, complaining that the College did nothing for its past students, and grumbling because I had never been asked to conduct the College orchestra, although I had conducted opera at Covent Garden Theatre. Why I should have had any particular ambition to direct a students' orchestra still remains a mystery to me; but I recollect that at that time I could imagine no greater compliment in the world than to be asked to conduct the orchestra in which I had played first fiddle! Parry was then the Director, and instead of ignoring my letter, as many would have done in his position, he wrote to me and told me to go and see him. I did so. His reception of me was as cordial and hearty as ever, though the first thing he said made me feel somewhat shamefaced. "Sit you down, you young firebrand," said he, "and don't go blaming your Alma Mater because you've struck a quiet time and are not acknowledged as the greatest conductor in England all at once." I flinched. He came over and placed his hands kindly on my shoulder. "Look here, Ronald," he said, "you are being a great credit to us, and you'll be a greater one if you'll keep your head. You complain that we don't help our past students. That is false. We do an awful lot of good for them, and you know it. But we are not out to help those who have helped themselves as successfully as you have. You expect Stanford to hand over his baton to you, so that you may show the students that you know how to conduct. Would *you* have liked past students coming along when *you* played first fiddle, two or three years ago, wasting the time of the orchestra and interrupting their work?" I felt too ashamed to reply—I had a nasty sensation at the back of my throat. A whacking smack on my back and a hearty shake of both hands, and he was thrusting me out of his room with a "God bless you, my boy! Don't get imaginary grievances into your head. Go in and win, and come and borrow some more

books of me whenever you like. It was good of you to come, and I'm glad to have seen you. Good-bye, good-bye." And in that short interview I learnt more of what *not* to do in life and what I *should* do than in any subsequent interview I can remember.

When I became Principal of the Guildha'l School of Music some years later, Parry and I sat on one or two committees together. He laughed heartily and chaffed me because, whenever he asked me a question, I replied with all the old respect, "Yes, sir," or "No, sir." I was always addressing the hero of my youth — my master, my professor, for whom I had the greatest reverence and the greatest esteem.

Sir Hubert Parry.

SIR FREDERIC COWEN.

Although Sir Frederic Cowen is some twenty years older than I am, we are the greatest of "chums" and more often than not we spend our holidays together. We have much in common, and yet in many ways we are diametrically opposed. He is slow and deliberate; I am quick and impetuous. The luxuries of life mean little or nothing to him; they mean a great deal to me. He loves climbing mountains and going abroad; I cordially dislike doing either. Although I have known him since I was a boy, it was the war which really brought us together. Like many others he was prevented from going abroad and had to be content with spending his summer holiday at a beautiful spot in Sussex, where, at his suggestion, I joined him. The visit was such a success that we have repeated it several times and have persuaded many mutual friends to join us. We form a merry party and behave like great big schoolboys.

Cowen is very quick-witted and his humour is exceedingly dry. He takes being chaffed admirably and returns it with interest. He is very good company and heartily enters into the spirit of any nonsensical game that may be suggested. There is not a grain of conceit in him and he is in no way eccentric. He is undoubtedly inclined to look at the black side of things—and this causes much laughter, in which he is the first to join. He is a very kind man and all his life has assisted the beginner and the struggling professional. His appearance gives no clue to his being a musician, and he is the last man to give one the impression that he has composed operas, cantatas, symphonies, and some of the most popular songs of the day, or that at one time he was the conductor of every important Festival and series of concerts in the country. These are things that the public remember, however, and that is his reward.

II.—POT-POURRI.

As a young man I always had a great desire to see a Ghost. I was invited to week-end house parties, and invariably got hold of the head gardener to try and extract from him any legend about some ancestor of my host or hostess having been murdered. If the ancestor took it into his head to walk up and down on a terrace at any particular hour, I meant to watch for him and see him when he appeared. I met with little or no success until I was asked by Lady Warwick to go to Warwick Castle for a week-end, I accepted the invitation gladly—as a matter of fact, I believe it was a professional engagement. On the Sunday morning I strolled through the beautiful grounds and found exactly what I was seeking—an old gardener who would obviously never see seventy again, who informed me that he had been in the service of the family since boyhood days. Many were the ghost stories he had to tell me, but one in particular seemed to be the genuine article. Some

good lady had been murdered by her husband in a mad fit of jealousy centuries ago, and she had never been known to miss taking her prowl "around that there turret every night at midnight." My bedroom was just opposite "that there turret," and I could have a sort of private view all to myself and yet be well out of harm's way!

Accordingly at half-past eleven that night I began my lonely vigil at my bedroom window. Nothing occurred for one solid hour, and as I caught myself nearly falling asleep several times I gave it up as a bad job and went to bed. About two hours afterwards I was awakened from a very deep sleep by being gently tossed from side to side in my bed as if I had been on board ship, and I distinctly heard a huge wardrobe in my room creaking in every part of it. I felt for the matches to light my candle, crying out in my deepest voice, "Who's there?" A deathly silence was my only answer. I got out of bed, turned on all the light I could, and made a thorough search. I looked under the bed, critically examined every nook and corner of the room and in particular, of the wardrobe, rattled my walking-stick up the chimney, and opened the door to see if there was anyone in the passage. Nobody—nothing! I was absolutely positive it had not been a nightmare, and the only conclusion I could arrive at was that I had had a ghostly visitor. I returned to bed and only fell asleep as daylight began to peep through the blind.

We were all to return to London early on Monday morning. Most of the ladies had breakfast in their rooms and the men helped themselves to what they wanted from the sideboard in the dining-room. I was down first, but was quickly followed by a grumpy old colonel who complained of having had "a d—d bad night, sir." Something had disturbed him about half-past two in the morning and he could only imagine that the d—d place was haunted, as it took "a devil of a lot" to disturb his slumbers. As man after man entered the room each of them had a similar story to tell. When we were joined by the ladies there was much chaffing about "drinking too much whisky overnight," but several of them admitted that they had been disturbed. All of us were eventually taken to the station in carriages (there were no motor-cars in those days), and as we arrived at the platform the first thing I saw was a *Daily Telegraph* bill with the following words printed in big capitals: "Bad Earthquake Shock in Warwickshire."

NOT many of my readers will recall the name of William Greet, although he was a famous theatrical manager a quarter of a century back and owned the leases of the Lyric and the Avenue Theatres—the latter being known to-day as the Playhouse. I had been on tour with one or two of his provincial companies as musical director and was out of a job when I received a telegram asking me to go and see him. He was a delightful man, with a most courteous and friendly manner. He informed me that he was in a quandary and wanted me to help him out.

At the Avenue Theatre a piece called "The Lady Slavey" was being played, in which a lady named May Yohe was the bright particular "star." She had previously achieved great popularity in a musical comedy called "Little Christopher Columbus." Miss Yohe, it appeared, took strong likes and dislikes and was undoubtedly somewhat difficult to manage. Mr. Greet informed me that she could not get on with the musical director, and threatened to leave the theatre if someone else was not engaged in his place. He added that he personally had no fault to find with the man; indeed, he was a first-rate conductor. But May Yohe "drew" hundreds of pounds to the theatre and the conductor did not "draw" anything—so he would have to go! I asked who it was. "Oh," Greet replied, "you wouldn't know him by name, but, take it from me, he's a first-class man. His name is Henry J. Wood; he has been with all kinds of grand opera companies, and I have an idea that he heartily dislikes this musical-comedy stuff. *Will you take his place?*" I promptly and definitely refused. I had never heard of Henry J. Wood and knew nothing about him, but I pointed out to Mr. Greet that I thought it nothing short of a scandal that, as he was such a good conductor, he should be turned out owing to the whim of an American musical-comedy star. I begged him to be firm with the lady and inform her that she must allow Mr. Wood to remain till the end of the run of the piece, when I would gladly conduct the one to follow. This was eventually arranged, and in the latter half of 1894 I rehearsed a masterpiece (!) called "Dandy Dick Whittington," which had but a short run.

In after years it was always William Greet's proud boast that both Henry J. Wood and myself served under his banner during the same year, and he often recounted the incident with the greatest relish. It was not fated that Henry J. Wood and myself were to meet until many years later. It took but a little time then for a mere acquaintanceship to ripen into a true friendship, which has lasted till to-day.

LORD BERESFORD—known to his intimate friends as "Charley Beresford"—was an excellent raconteur. Shortly after the Great War was over, I remember him telling the following story with much gusto. He was returning from America to this country during 1916 or 1917, when he made friends on board ship with a very prominent and famous American citizen who was on his way to France. Lord Beresford persuaded him to remain in London two or three days so that he might show him some hospitality. Accordingly a big dinner was arranged at Lord Beresford's house, opposite the Marble Arch, and all the distinguished diplomats and interesting people then in London were asked to meet the well-known American. Imagine everybody's amazement on the evening in question when the American turned up dressed in a brown tweed suit! Not a word was said, though everyone looked aghast. The one person who appeared quite unconcerned was Lord Beresford. He warmly welcomed his late fellow-traveller, and during dinner made an admirable speech proposing his health. The American arose to reply. Speaking with a very marked accent and great deliberation, he said: "Lord Beresford, ladies, and gentlemen,—I feel that a word of personal explanation is due to you. When I entered this room I saw you all look askance because I appeared before you in a brown tweed suit. Now let me explain that I left America very hurriedly and only just threw into my kit-bag a few necessary articles of wearing apparel, amongst which were *not* my 'wedding garments.' After accepting Lord Beresford's kind invitation for to-night I hastened to one of your West-end tailors and explained to him that I required an evening dress-suit at once. To that he replied: 'It is impossible.' 'Why?' I asked. 'Because,' said he, 'there is no time, no cloth, and no men. There happens to be a war on.' 'Well,' said I, 'what's to be done?' 'Your best plan,' he replied, 'is to go to Willie Clarkson, who will fit you up fine.' Accordingly, ladies and gentlemen, I went the following day to Mr. Clarkson and explained to *him* what I required. He said at once: 'It is impossible.' 'Why?' I asked. 'Because,' said he, 'every single dress-suit we have in the place has already been hired for Lord Beresford's dinner party to-morrow night!'"

"Lord Beresford, ladies, and gentlemen,—When I entered this room I saw you all look askance because I appeared before you in a brown tweed suit."

I WAS asked by the chairman of the British Red Cross Society in 1918 if I would undertake to get up a big charity concert at Queen's Hall in aid of their funds. It was with the greatest pleasure that I consented to do as I was asked—my chief difficulty being to think of something original which would attract the public. I eventually decided to give an orchestral concert of humorous music, which I duly announced to take place on October 28th, 1918. An appeal from me to the Royal Albert Hall Orchestra to give their services was at once acceded to, and I experienced the same kindness from every member of the profession whom I approached. The items which were eventually included in the programme were, among others, Haydn's "Farewell" Symphony, a musical comedy duet and "dance off" by Carrie Tubb and Harry Dearth, some "Dithering Ditties" perfectly sung by Gregory Hast, the "Pizzicato" movement from Delibes's "Suite de Ballet," "Sylvia" conducted by George Robey, a humorous movement from Sir Alexander Mackenzie's Suite "London Day by Day," conducted by the composer, and, as a great finale, a "Toy" Symphony in which the following "Star Cast" appeared:—

First Violins.	Second Violins.
Sybil Eaton.	Edward German.
Margaret Fairless.	D. de Groot.
May Harrison.	Margaret Harrison.
Daisy Kennedy.	Sir A. C. Mackenzie.
Max Mossel.	Arthur Payne.
John Saunders.	Albert Sammons.
Violas.	**Celli.**
York Bowen.	C. Warwick Evans.
Alfred Gibson.	Beatrice Harrison.
Waldo Warner.	W. H. Squire.

More Variations on a Personal Theme

TOY INSTRUMENTS.

PIANO.
Arthur de Greef.

TAMBOURINE.
Gregory Hast.

NIGHTINGALES.
Irene Scharrer.
Myra Hess.
Muriel Foster.

BIG DRUM.
Joseph Ivimey.

TRIANGLE.
Benno Moiseiwitsch.

CUCKOOS.
Madame Albani.
Ada Crossley.
Carrie Tubb.

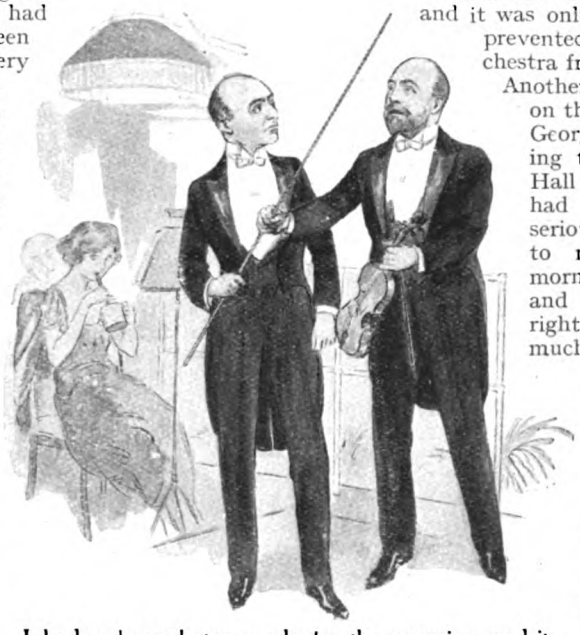
CYMBALS.
Sir Edward Elgar, O.M.

RATTLES.
Sir Frederick Bridge.
Sir Frederic Cowen.

CASTANETS.
Haydn Coffin.
Mark Hambourg.

SPEAKER.
Harry Dearth.

Such a gathering of musical celebrities had rarely, if ever, been seen before, and every member of this unique orchestra entered splendidly into the spirit of the thing. As they walked on to the platform the audience accorded each celebrity an enthusiastic welcome. Quite an ovation was given to Madame Albani as I led her on, for she had come specially out of her retirement for this concert. I had a large baton, several feet long, made for the occasion, and it was arranged that I should start conducting, and that after a few bars Sir Alexander Mackenzie was to walk up to the stand and expostulate with me, take the baton from me, and hand me his violin. Afterwards Sir Frederic Cowen turned Mackenzie out and Edward German turned Cowen out, and eventually I took German's place and finished the "Symphony" amidst uproarious laughter and applause. During the performance Sir Alexander Mackenzie perpetrated a joke which so convulsed the orchestra that I was afraid they would break down. I must explain that Irene Scharrer, Myra Hess, and Muriel Foster had each to have a mug of water in which to blow their toy instrument, "The Nightingale," so that the desired result might be obtained. At rehearsal this must have been a somewhat wet proceeding for Sir Alexander, who was sitting just in front of them, although at the time no word of complaint escaped his lips. At the performance, however, no sooner did the warble of the "Nightingales" commence than Sir Alexander quietly put down his violin and, producing a large umbrella from somewhere, opened it, rested it on his shoulder, and then immediately resumed his playing. It was all done so quietly and unostentatiously that it was a good minute or two before either the audience or the orchestra realized what had taken place. Then a roar of laughter ensued, and it was only a miracle which prevented the whole orchestra from stopping.



I had a large baton made for the occasion, and it was arranged that after a few bars Sir Alexander Mackenzie was to walk up and expostulate with me.

Another outstanding item on the programme was George Robey conducting the Royal Albert Hall Orchestra. Robey had really taken this seriously. He came to rehearsal on the morning of the concert and got through all right after causing much merriment. But the concert itself was a very different proposition. He no sooner showed himself on the platform than a shriek of laughter from the audience greeted him. Personally, I believe this rather annoyed than pleased him. He mounted the rostrum and took up his baton. This was the sign for another outburst of laughter, and he could not begin. He turned his head round sharply and looked at the audience, raising his eyebrows. He might have been going to jerk out one of his well-known catch-phrases, and accordingly nothing could stop the laughter. He tapped the desk and began. The orchestra tried to keep serious, but it was all in vain, and eventually Robey became Robey and said a few things to them in a very audible voice, the number finishing amidst a hurricane of applause and laughter. There was no encore; he knew nothing else to conduct!

(Another instalment of Sir Landon Ronald's Reminiscences will appear next month.)

THE CAVERN SPIDER

by

L. J. BEESTON

ILLUSTRATED BY W. SMITHSON BROADHEAD

AT half-past eight, Murrell, who had been dining his blind friend Spalding at the club, brought him into the smoking-room. A dozen men were chatting and reading, and amongst these was a member named Fricker, buried in a deep chair, and reading a leading article in a newspaper. The slight disturbance caused by two or three men hurriedly rising to clear a way for Murrell and his guest drew Fricker's eyes over the top of his paper.

In a fraction of a second those eyes dilated, blazed with some extraordinary emotion. Before the second had passed, Fricker raised the newspaper above the level of his head. His hands crushed the edges of the sheet as if he were trying to wrench it apart; it became visibly agitated, and rustled in his grasp. He seemed to collapse in his chair, to double up in its softness as if he had been shot in the stomach.

Three minutes elapsed, and all of Fricker that moved were his trembling hands. A member strolled by and looked round at him smilingly.

"Picture of absorption!" said this member. "Concentration fathoms deep. What's the article, Fricker?"

The genial words came to Fricker's consciousness as from across an abyss. Slowly, and with pain, he rallied himself to answer.

"I was half asleep," said he, faintly. "Was—was that Murrell who came in just now?"

The member seated himself on the arm of the divan chair by Fricker's elbow. "Murrell, yes," said he. "Over by the window. Brought a friend with him, whom he has just introduced to us."

Fricker struggled for breath. "What's his name?" he asked.

"Spalding."

Fricker stifled a groan.

"A poor blind chap," went on his informant.

"Blind!" Fricker gasped the word. At once he sat upright, letting his paper fall, his gaze travelling to a window nearest the door. Three or four men were collected there, and in the centre he perceived Spalding, with his friend Murrell by his side.

"Yes—and no," said the member, replying to Fricker's exclamation. "It is one of those queer cases of so-called shell-shock, of which there are lots about. Spalding—so Murrell told us—went right through the war, and greatly distinguished himself. In almost the very last hour a shell exploded within three yards of him, and the flame of it was the last thing Spalding saw, for it made him stone-blind. And yet his eyes, say the doctors, are uninjured, and there is no earthly reason why he shouldn't see. Of course, his case is not the only one of the sort, as we know. Just a matter of deranged nerves, so we are asked to believe. Neurasthenia in a highly aggravated form. He only *thinks* he is sightless, just as other subjects think they are deaf, or paralysed. I admit it's beyond my understanding, although it is

common enough. The well-known cure for such cases is a tremendous recoil, a counter-shock, but that is more easily advised than worked."

"Yes," said Fricker, simply, but a great relief had relaxed his features, and colour had come again to his cheeks.

At that moment a voice which had never been heard in the club until that evening, a deep voice with a vibrant note not without harshness, answered some remark and claimed complete attention. Spalding was speaking.

"Oh, we can make too much of it, gentlemen," said he. "Imagine the human species created without eyes. Well? Well, I venture to believe that things would be much about the same as they are now. Yes, I do. Man would have developed instincts, and a vastly better sense of touch and hearing and smell than he has now. He would run about and build and fashion much as he does now. Adaptability! There you have it. We might have a few less pleasures, but not so very many less, and I am perfectly sure that what we now find the sweetest of all would be the sweetest then."

There was a pause, and then someone said—"The accumulation of wealth?"

The other replied by a contemptuous gesture.

A second auditor ventured—"A man's love for a maid?"

"Revenge!"

The word came with a non-melodramatic, quiet emphasis, a certainty of conviction founded on something far deeper than opinion. As he spoke he turned his head slightly, so that Fricker caught it clearly; but he would have caught it in any case, for he was waiting for it, expected it, and when it came it knocked upon his heart like a jarring blow.

"But you will say," continued Spalding, slowly and deliberately, "that absence of vision limits the chance of vengeance. Yes, but it does not destroy it. And if the subject against whom vengeance was directed had eyes to see, while his enemy had none, then the chance would appear to be almost annihilated. But that appearance would be deceptive, for, given wrong enough, hate enough, determination enough, the sightless one would find his quarry if on this side of the lasting dark; and this I will prove to you by a little illustration."

Fricker made a movement as if to get up, but refrained, fearing to draw any notice upon himself.

"In certain of the deep caverns of the Carpathian mountains," went on the speaker, impressively, "a spider is found which has been born and lived there for countless generations. It is known as the eyeless cavern spider. It is as white as a flake of snow, as silent as a spectre. Nature has long deprived it of eyes, for it has no use for sight in those lightless depths. Have you heard how that monstrosity, which is born in night and in night dies, tracks its prey? I will show you."

As he spoke, he rose from his chair.

Suddenly Fricker felt ice in his blood. He struggled to get up, but lacked strength for the effort.

"The spider must live, therefore it must find food," continued Spalding, putting out his arms and beginning to move, while his audience, strangely fascinated, watched him in silence. "It feeds upon a beetle. But the beetle has eyes; it sees perfectly well; it perceives its relentless enemy crawling towards it. How does the spider know that the beetle is there? It knows because of a peculiar scent which emanates from that particular kind of beetle. The beetle watches that white scorpion creeping towards it, stretching out its quivering palpi in all directions, and it runs from the embrace!"

Fricker saw the speaker approaching in his direction. The thought, "He heard me asking about him—knows I am just here!" flamed through his brain. He gripped the arms of his chair; he fought with the nightmare spell upon him.

"The beetle flies," went on Spalding, moving slowly with arms outstretched, "but it is doomed. It is doomed because it must sleep. Again and again it evades its fate; a dozen times it eludes the spring; but the moment comes when it dozes, is momentarily still, and in that instant the milk-white spectre leaps upon it, and the mailed skin crushes under the jaws!"

Spalding seemed to lurch forward, and Fricker, making a supreme effort, slipped away from his chair as the other's arms waved over the spot where his head had been.

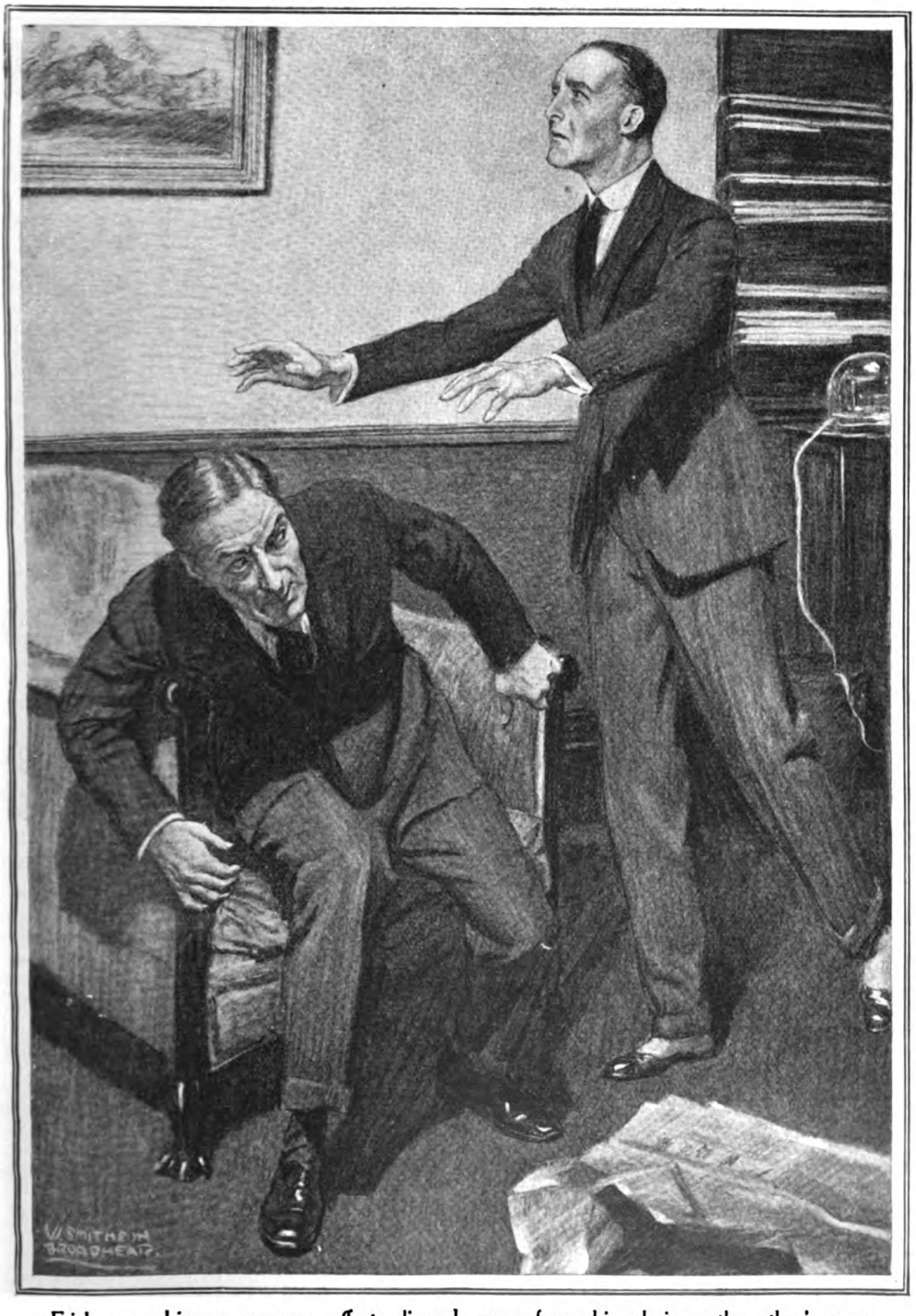
There was a nervous laugh. Someone said—"Old Fricker looks scared."

A WEEK later Fricker left his office, which was in a new block of business premises off the Marylebone Road, at six o'clock, mounted a motor-bus, and got off at Warren Street Station for the Hampstead Underground, for he lived at that northern suburb.

At the entrance to the station he saw Murrell, who was leisurely waiting there.

"Hallo, old man!" Murrell greeted. "Knocked off? I haven't seen you at the club lately—not since that night when I brought in poor Spalding and he tried to curdle our blood."

Fricker had a question or two to ask about



Fricker, making a supreme effort, slipped away from his chair as the other's arms waved over the spot where his head had been.

that. He drew Murrell to a secluded corner by the bookstall.

"Had you any particular reason for bringing him?" he asked. "I mean—had he expressed a wish to meet any of us there?"

"No special wish that I can recall," answered Murrell, carelessly. "Two or three of my pals he knows—and you among them, for he asked after you."

"Yes?" said Fricker, with assumed indifference.

"Yes. I told him you were a fellow-member, and he seemed a bit interested, I fancied. And yet not so much in you personally, perhaps, as in your particular line of varnishes, gums, and shellac. I think he has an eye to a deal. He wanted your business address, and I gave it to him, of course. You may hear from him."

Fricker did not answer.

"Poor Spalding," went on Murrell, reflectively. "He was once the pith and centre of something like a tragedy. That man has spent three years in prison. I violate no confidence in speaking of it, for he told me so himself, and openly, and before others. He does not seek to bury the fact, and perhaps he is wise, for that sort of secret wants a lot of burying. But he affirms, with a frank insistence that carries real weight, that he was guiltless of the thing that pushed him under, and he adds that his innocence could have been proved but for the perfidy of a man he once called friend."

Fricker groped for his cigar-case. "Indeed?" he muttered, with lowered eyes.

"A friend who could have proved the *alibi* which was Spalding's defence," continued Murrell. "A somewhat queer and unusual case. There was a woman in it, I believe. Possibly they both loved and wanted her. I don't know much about that, but I understood positively from Spalding that his nameless friend refused in the witness-box to bear out the *alibi* claim that would have saved the prisoner. A bad, bad case if it happened as Spalding said."

"He is reticent about it, at any rate," murmured Fricker, as Murrell seemed to expect comment.

"Very. But he broods over it. I am sure he broods over it. Not even his service in the war, which followed his imprisonment, has numbed the wrong which rankles—festers—in his heart. He has not been long in England, and already you heard his remarks about revenge."

"Was he speaking of himself—his own case?"

"I am certain that he was, more's the pity. That simile which he drew; he fancied himself the spider—reaching, crawling, ever seeking his victim! It was not pretty."

Fricker forced himself to ask—"Have you seen him since?"

"No, but I am to meet him this evening."

"Where?"

"Here."

"*Here?*"

"Yes, it is an appointment—ah, here he is."

Fricker spun round as if a knife had menaced his spine, and he saw Spalding within three yards of him. He had just come up from a train, and a guiding hand had helped him from the lift. Straight towards the two speakers he was coming, his head thrust forward slightly. There was no sight in his eyes, which seemed quite normal, save that they were set in Fricker's direction, and in the stare of them a flame.

Fricker stepped hastily aside. His "Good night, Murrell," was only just audible. He realized that he was horribly afraid. A metaphor had jangled all his nerves.

IT was about an hour after Fricker's customary time for going home. His stenographer had gone, and he was alone in his office. Business was not detaining him, for he had finished for the day; and although with the darkness had come wind and rain, yet a matter of weather would not have made him linger.

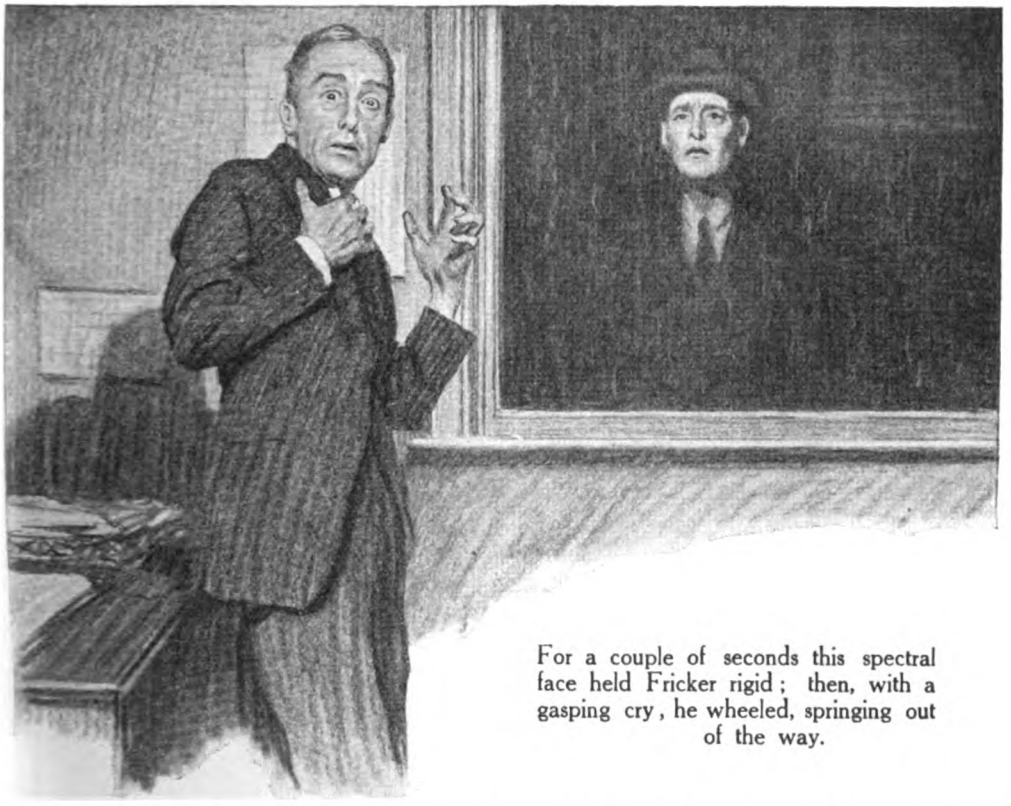
It was a letter spread out before him on his desk which absorbed his attention. His elbows were propped on either side of it, and his fists ground into his temples. This letter was in a feminine handwriting; it was not long, and the second paragraph ran as follows:—

> *"But you need not have told me. We have not met since that time without my seeing the truth in your face. It has peeped from your eyes; it was behind every conventional word you spoke. Oh, not for a moment was I deceived. . . ."*

When he had read these words for the twentieth time Fricker pushed back his revolving chair and got up wearily.

"My soul! She knew, and I never guessed it!" he said aloud.

He crossed the office to the window, where he stood with his face almost touching the glass. Down the pane confused channels of rain were running, and at that great height—for his room was on the topmost storey—the cry of the wind came deep and full. Lost in a gloomy abstraction, he was staring absently into the glass, when he saw, in the dark mirror that it made, and creeping upon him, a face without a body!



For a couple of seconds this spectral face held Fricker rigid; then, with a gasping cry, he wheeled, springing out of the way.

For a couple of seconds this spectral face held Fricker rigid; then, with a gasping cry, he wheeled, springing out of the way.

Spalding was within a few feet of him, stretching out his arms, putting out his big strong hands for the grip!

Between those hands and the wall was a little space, and Fricker tried to rush it on his way to the closed door. Instantly his right shoulder was clutched, but he tore himself loose and retreated back to the window.

There was half a minute of intense silence. He could hear his heart thumping in his ears.

"Where are you, Fricker?" said Spalding, extending his arms sideways. "You do not answer. All right. I know you are here."

The other moved a trifle, on the tips of his toes.

"That will not help you," went on the grim voice. "I do not think you can escape me this time. I am in your office, Fricker, and you are alone. You know Murrell? He brought me here. I told him I wanted to do a business deal with you. He is waiting for me below. I shall join him presently—after I have killed you."

As Spalding spoke, his left hand touched the roll-top desk. This desk extended at right angles from the wall into the room, so that Fricker could not escape that side. Between Spalding and the other wall was a certain space, but it was limited by the stenographer's table. Fricker's one chance was to slip between this table and Spalding's right arm, and so gain the door by a rush, but his first attempt had unnerved him, and he felt that he would fail.

"For I am going to kill you," went on the other, steadily. "Oh, you thrice-damned thief! You robbed me of all that was worth having in life, and you shall pay for it!"

Fricker almost stopped his breathing. An impulse to shout for help he abandoned, for the cry would bring Spalding straight upon him. Then he thought of the telephone. It was on the ledge on the top of his desk, and he could reach it, could whip off the receiver, would have time for the sinister call—"Police! There is murder here!"

But as if the other divined the idea, his groping left hand came in contact with the 'phone. He felt for the flexible cord, and he strove to snap it with a fierce wrench. Finding that he could not do this, he lifted the

whole thing from the ledge and placed it upon the desk, on the letter which Fricker had been reading.

"Where are you, Fricker?" said Spalding again, terribly calm.

The other threw an agonized glance to right and left.

"You perjured liar, Fricker! I know you are there, and now I will settle with you."

He began to advance, his arms wide; Fricker saw the space growing more narrow. A sweat of horror broke upon his forehead. Unless he could do something those groping hands would be at his throat in less than a minute! As he crushed back against the open window the idea of escaping that way was bound to occur to him.

It was bound, also, to add to his fear. In imagination he saw himself clinging to the face of a towering stone precipice. What! must he accept such a risk? Yes, and instantly, for the space between him and his enemy was steadily decreasing.

Fricker turned noiselessly, got one leg over the sill, then the other. He was in a kneeling posture upon the ledge which ran along the upper façade of the structure, supported by huge, curved ornamental brackets of stone. He rose slowly to his feet, holding on to the upper sash of the window. If he could only keep his nerve there was sufficient standing-room; he had only to forget the stark, deep drop behind him. Forget it? With his quaking heart?

Yet he gained a little confidence as he perceived that Spalding was at fault. His outspread arms were feeling here and there; it was evident that he had not guessed how his prey had eluded him.

So Fricker tried to comfort himself; but he was wrong. Spalding fancied he had heard the other climb from the window, the cool, rain-washed air blowing in upon his face; only he was making quite sure before he followed.

Suddenly, with a sensation of redoubled terror, Fricker saw his enemy begin to climb out as he himself had done! Instinctively he edged off to his right, abandoning the friendly window-sash, his palms touching the harsh stones above his head. He saw Spalding come out, saw him stand upright on the perilous platform.

WHICH direction would Spalding take? Life or death hung upon that for Fricker. If he moved sideways to the left, Fricker was saved, for he would then creep back, enter his office, and make a bolt down the staircase.

Spalding hesitated, and in that moment of agony Fricker prayed for deliverance. In vain! His relentless enemy began to shuffle right-wards—in his direction.

Fricker had no option but to continue. Inch by inch he edged along, and inch by inch Spalding followed, as if he saw, as if he heard. At the foot of the abyss the swift cars seemed to crawl, their powerful head-lights glimmering like a glow-worm's lamp. The plane trees which bordered the street, which were so majestic to the pedestrian beneath them, were at this height but dwarf bushes. The motor horns, which sounded loud and sonorous on the street level, drifted up to the ears of the climbers as if sent from a child's trumpet.

Fricker kept fighting for his nerve. The smell of the smoke-stained stones was nauseating. Poised on such a pinnacle, all round him the veil of the falling rain, his isolation seemed vaster than the polar fields.

On and on he went, and still Spalding did not give up. What a fight would it be if they met on such an eyrie! Or, rather, it would be no fight at all, for down they would both go, into that fell abyss.

Suddenly Fricker came to where a column—a pilaster—was imbedded for half its depth into the wall. The ledge ran out and round this pilaster, but became narrowed in the process, offering but scanty foothold. If he would continue his journey Fricker must walk *out* from the building, and so round the column, and on his toes! Was he equal to it?

No! The thought sapped his remaining strength; his brain grew dizzy, his knees shook. Rather would he wait for Spalding to come up, and, taking the latter unawares, hurl him from his foothold. It was kill or be killed. Why should he not defend his life?

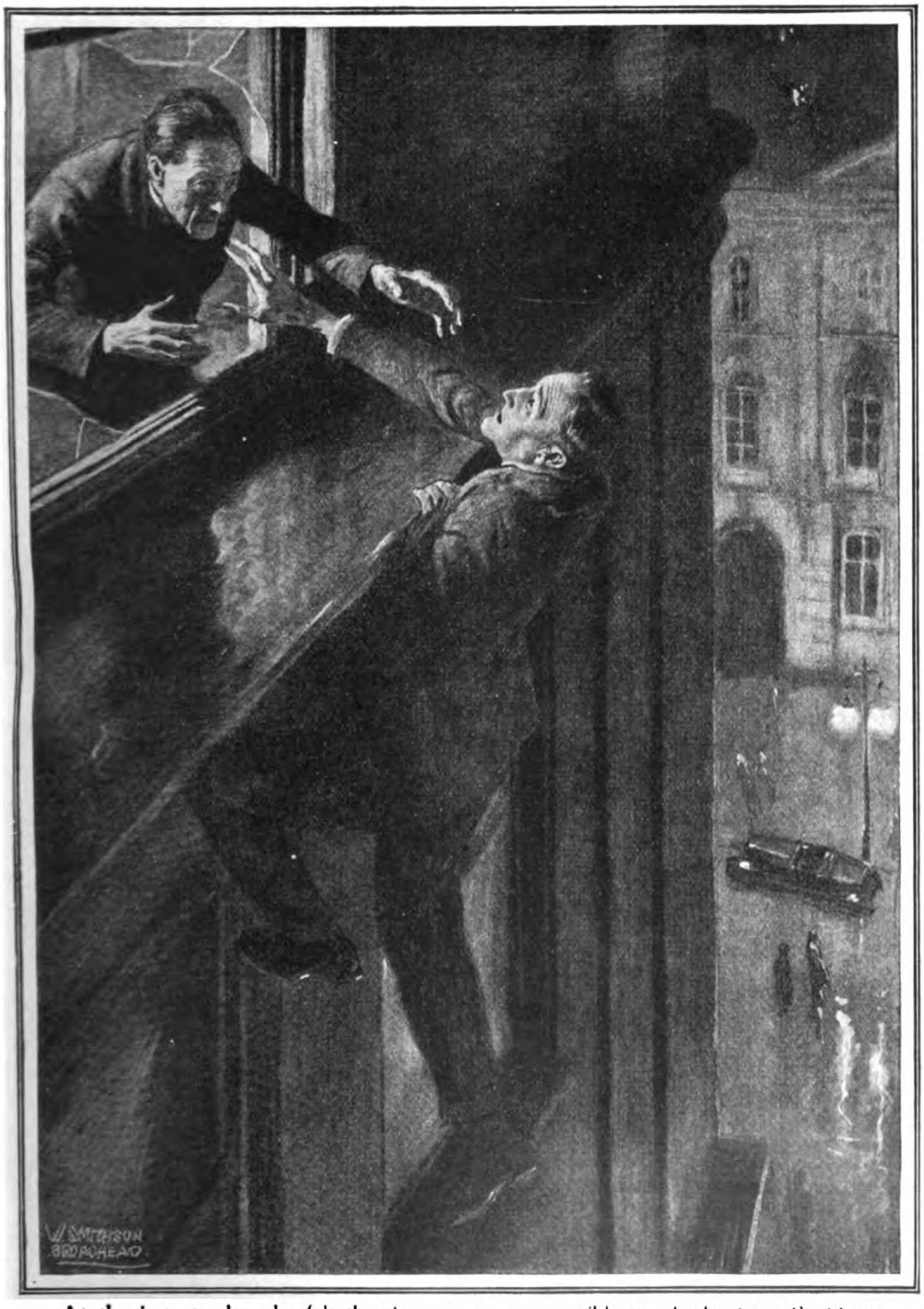
But when Spalding was within two feet of Fricker he paused for the first time. Evidently he was thinking that he had chosen the wrong direction, that his prey would not have had the courage to proceed so far on such a pathway. After a half-minute of indecision he commenced to retrace his crawl.

Fricker let him proceed a yard, then followed. On and on went Spalding, feeling his way carefully, his face to the wall, until he reached the window through which he had emerged.

"If he goes beyond that, I shall live through this horror," was the thought that flashed through Fricker's brain.

And with an indescribable relief he watched his pursuer continue his progress left-ward of the window, in the hope to find his quarry standing there. Fricker hastened his action as much as he dared. He reached the open window, he bent his body, he jumped down upon his office floor.

But in his hurry he had lightly struck the upper sash with his head. The sound came



At the instant when he felt that he was going a terrible cry broke from Spalding. The swing of his legs in the void seemed but an instant interlude to his descent through the gulf.

sharply to Spalding, who was within a couple of feet. With utter carelessness of his own peril he stepped swiftly back to the window, but as he reached it his feet slipped upon the wet stone.

Spalding dropped forwards, his forehead striking the window and splintering it. His body almost as far as to his throat shot out over the abyss; his left arm was bent, twisted and strained, between his chest and the edge of the stone ledge, and his right hand, clutching wildly forward, met Fricker, just inside the room, who grasped it by the wrist.

At the instant when he felt that he was going a terrible cry broke from Spalding. The crash of his fall upon the narrow ledge, the swing of his legs in the void, seemed but an instant interlude to his descent through the gulf. Believing that the smash was imminent, that he was actually in the void, he uttered a second cry, tried to fling out his arms, and then——

Then he found himself literally glaring into the face of Fricker, who had got him by the wrist!

For that tense moment of anguish, of sickening expectation, had imparted the needful shock to his nerves, and lifted the night from his senses. Dazed almost to stupefaction, Spalding yet saw with a clear vision, and in the instant of his seeing realized that the man whose life he had hunted now held his in the grip of both hands.

Believing that Fricker would surely let go, would push him back from the ledge, Spalding made an effort to heave himself up; but his other arm, bent under him, failed, and a groan burst from his lips.

Fricker, inside the room, braced his knees against the wall under the window; if Spalding had been quite suspended in the outer space he could not have held him; as it was, he held him with difficulty. He could have relaxed his grip on the wrist; he probably would have done so, but something in the other's bewildered, astonished gaze flashed the truth upon Fricker, and sheer amazement for the moment possessed him.

Spalding panted—"Let me go! Get it over, for God's sake!"

Fricker hesitated. A tempest seemed to roar through his head. He had but to open his fingers—only that——

The storm passed, and he was suddenly calm.

"Help yourself a bit, Spalding," he gasped, putting forth all his strength.

It was a bitter, grim effort; but inch by inch Spalding was tugged up from the wide space below him. When he was fairly balanced on the ledge, Fricker got him by the shoulders and half-lifted, half-dragged him into the room. He pushed his chair forward, and Spalding, his left arm utterly useless, his ashen face glistening with a sweat of pain, dropped into it.

Fricker leaned upon his roll-top desk. All his strength was gone; he felt abruptly sick—sick to the soul.

Presently Spalding said, hoarsely—"Shall we get out of this?"

The other slowly drew himself upright and faced the speaker.

"You devil, Spalding," said he, huskily. "Into ten minutes of my life you have packed the years of suffering I gave you."

"Serve you right!"

"What! Why, I might have let you go down!"

"Did I beg mercy of you?"

"Ah, you do not value your life?"

Spalding rolled still-astonished eyes. "I can see," he murmured.

"Thank God for it, then."

"Fricker, I can see your face, and it is whiter than death. I won't say I'm sorry I scared you, although if our positions had been reversed just now, I think I'd have let you drop."

"Who knows?" said Fricker. He heaved a deep sigh and took a letter from his desk.

"This is from *her*," said he, gloomily. "I wrote to her a day ago and told her. I believed that, although she would not look at me since—since I pushed you under, she did not guess my perjury. But she did. She knew that I could have saved you; she knew that I lied away your *alibi*. In this letter she affirms that she saw the truth in my face; that it peeped from my eyes every time we met; that she was not deceived."

Spalding struggled from his chair.

"Ah, you did not marry her?" he cried.

"She would not have me."

"What—what has become of her?"

"She is waiting for you, I suppose. She has the look of a woman who loves and waits."

Spalding drew a deep breath. The two men stared straight into each other's eyes.

"Give me your arm, Fricker," said Spalding.

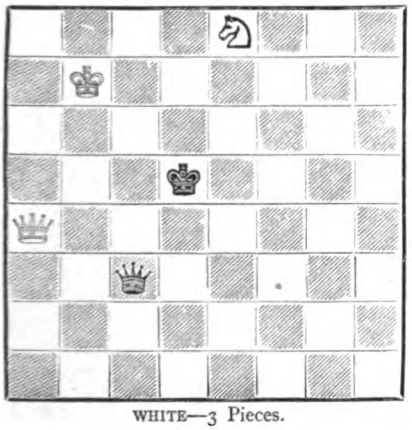
They went out together.

PERPLEXITIES.

By HENRY E. DUDENEY.

629.—AN INSTRUCTIVE POSITION.

BLACK—2 Pieces.



WHITE—3 Pieces.

White to play and win.

IT is remarkable how many games of chess are given up as drawn that might have been won. For example, in the position given probably any two players would agree to a draw, unless, perhaps, the player of White happened to be a genius. Yet it is a startling fact that White can actually capture Black's queen on the sixth move, and so win. How does he do it?

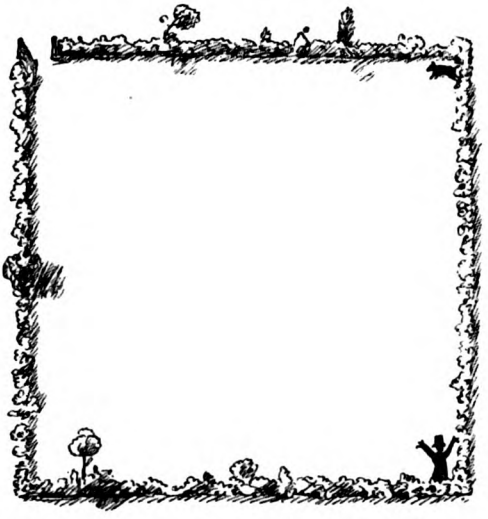
630.—A POETICAL POT-POURRI.

I DO not know who put together this ingenious arrangement, or where it first appeared, but I received it from America a good many years ago. Every successive line is taken from some famous author. How many of these can you trace?

The curfew tolls the knell of parting day
In every clime, from Lapland to Japan.
To fix one spark of Beauty's heavenly ray,
The proper study of mankind is man.
Tell (for you can), what is it to be wise,
Sweet Auburn, loveliest village of the plain.
"The Man of Ross," each lisping babe replies,
And drags, at each remove, a lengthening chain.
Ah, who can tell how hard it is to climb
Far as the solar walk or milky way!
Procrastination is the thief of time,
Let Hercules himself do what he may.
'Tis education forms the common mind,
The feast of reason and the flow of soul.
I must be cruel only to be kind,
And waft a sigh from Indies to the Pole.
Syphax! I joy to meet thee thus alone,
Where'er I roam, whatever realms to see,
A youth to fortune and to fame unknown,
In maiden meditation, fancy free.

631.—PAT AND THE PIG.

OUR diagram represents a field 100 yards square. Pat and the pig that he wishes to catch are in opposite corners, 100 yards apart. The pig runs straight for the open gateway in the top left-hand corner. As the Irishman can run just twice as fast as the pig, you would expect that he would first make straight



for the gate and close it. But that is not Pat's way of doing things. He goes directly for the pig all the time, thus taking a curved course. Now, does the pig escape, or does Pat catch it? And if he catches it, exactly how far does the pig run?

632.—THE KEG OF WINE.

A MAN had a ten-gallon keg of wine and a jug. One day he drew off a jugful of wine and filled up the keg with water. Later on, when the wine and water had got thoroughly mixed, he drew off another jugful, and again filled up the keg with water. The keg then contained equal quantities of wine and water. What was the capacity of the jug?

633.—ANAGRAMS.

THE following anagrams represent, when the letters in each case are rearranged, ten different trades or professions. Thus the letters in the word "break," when rearranged, make "baker."

Break. A deal tree. I cut one ear. I start one. It cost bacon. Kill robber. Ladders. Sal or I. Shake more. Sly ware.

634.—ADDING THEIR CUBES.

THE numbers 407 and 370 have this peculiarity, that they exactly equal the sum of the cubes of their digits. Thus the cube of 4 is 64, the cube of 0 is 0, and the cube of 7 is 343. Add together 64, 0, and 343, and you get 407. Again, the cube of 3 (27), added to the cube of 7 (343), is 370. Can you find a number not containing a nought that will work in the same way? Of course, we bar the absurd case of 1.

A Budget of Christmas Puzzles—Solutions.

FIND THEIR AGES.

DR. BATES had discovered the little trap in this problem. The figures forming the lady's age must not be reversed in order, by an exchange from left to right, but by turning them upside down. Her age was 66, which being reversed in this way makes the husband's age 99. (May he complete his century!) The difference is therefore 33, and the sum 165—five times as much.

THE DONKEY-CART JOURNEY.

THE journey took 10 $\frac{5}{11}$ hours. Atkins walked 5 $\frac{7}{11}$ miles at the end of his journey, Brown walked 13 $\frac{7}{11}$ at the beginning, and Cranby's donkey went altogether 80 $\frac{10}{11}$ miles. I hope the ass had a good rest after performing the feat.

IMITATIVE CHESS.

PLAY as follows: 1. P to Q B 4, P to Q B 4; 2. Q to R 4, Q to R 4; 3. Q to B 6, Q to B 6; 4. Q takes B, mate.

THE KNIGHT'S CENTURY.

THE dotted line in the diagram shows the solution. Play to 11, 13, 11, 13, 13, 13, 13, 13, and these numbers, added together, make exactly 100. The sum of 100

13	42	31	44	33
46	33	42	13	44
42	13	2	13	46
31	46	11	31	11
33	33	13	46	13

can only be made by a combination of two 11's and six 13's, from the numbers presented. When this is discovered, apart from the diagram, the route can immediately be found.

A CHARADE.

The word is SURF-ACE—SIR-FACE.

THE STONE PEDESTAL.

THE cube of a square number is always a square. Thus:—

The cube of 1 is 1, the square of 1.
The cube of 4 is 64, the square of 8.
The cube of 9 is 729, the square of 27.
The cube of 16 is 4,096, the square of 64,

and so on. We were told to look at the illustration. If there were one block in pedestal and one in base, the base would be entirely covered, which it was not. If 64 in pedestal and base, the side of the former would measure 4ft., and the side of square 8ft. A glance will show that this is wrong. But 729 blocks in each case is quite in agreement with the illustration, for the width of the pedestal (9ft.) would be one-third of the width of the square (27ft.). In all the successive higher cases the square will be increasingly too large for the pedestal to be in agreement with the illustration.

THE OLD FIFTEEN PUZZLE.

THE trick is to turn round the 6 counter so as to make 9, and the 9 counter to make 6. Then it is possible. For every disordered arrangement that can be put in order by an even number of exchanges is possible, and every arrangement that can be adjusted in an odd number of exchanges is impossible. The single exchange of 15 and 14 is an odd number (1), and therefore impossible. The double exchange of 15 with 14, and 6 with 9, is an even number (2), and possible. You can move as follows (after reversing the 6 and 9): 12, 8, 7, 9, 5, 6, 10, 5, 9, 11, 14, 15, 13, 10, 5, 14, 11, 9, 6, 5, 14, 11, 9, 7, 8, 12, 15, 9, 11, 13, 9, 15, 12, 11, 13, 14, 10, 9, 14, 13, 11, 12, 15, 14, 13, 10, 9, 13, 14, 15. I have not looked for the shortest possible method.

CRICKET AVERAGES.

WE cannot add averages in the manner shown. We must give them a common denominator and write as follows:—

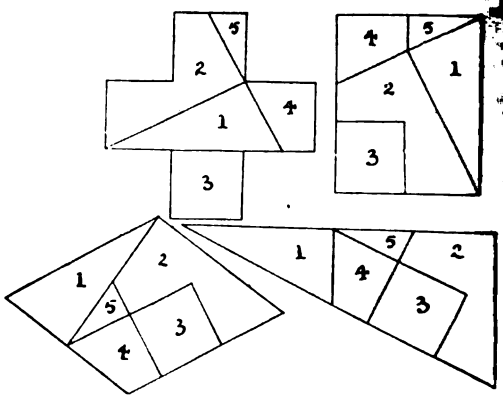
Wickets.		Runs.	Wickets.		Runs.
252	for	540	252	for	540
20	„	540	60	„	540
Haye 272	„	1080	Bee 312	„	1080

Haye's average is thus $\frac{272}{1080}$ and Bee's $\frac{312}{1080}$, which reduce to $\frac{34}{135}$ and $\frac{39}{135}$. Thus Bee has the better average, because he has taken the equivalent of 39 wickets for 135 runs, while Haye has only taken 34 wickets for 135 runs.

THE RECTANGULAR FIELD.

THE length must have been 40 rods and the width 30 rods to give a diagonal of 50 rods. The area was 7½ acres.

FIVE FIGURES FROM FIVE PIECES.



THE illustration shows exactly how the five pieces may be put together so as to form in turn (in addition to the square) the four given figures.

PERPLEXITY No. 622.—AN END-GAME.

THE author of this old puzzle was wrong on one point. If 6. Kt takes Q, K—Kt 6; 7. Kt—B 2, K—B 5; 8. Q—B 6, ch., K—K 6; 9. K—K sq., P—Kt 6; 10. Q—K 5, ch., K—B 6; 11. Q—K 4, mate. So White can really mate in eleven moves either way.

ACPOOLE'S
EAT STORY

THE GARDEN OF GOD

THE STRAND MAGAZINE

PAGE 6

The
Garden of God
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THE BLUE LAGOON

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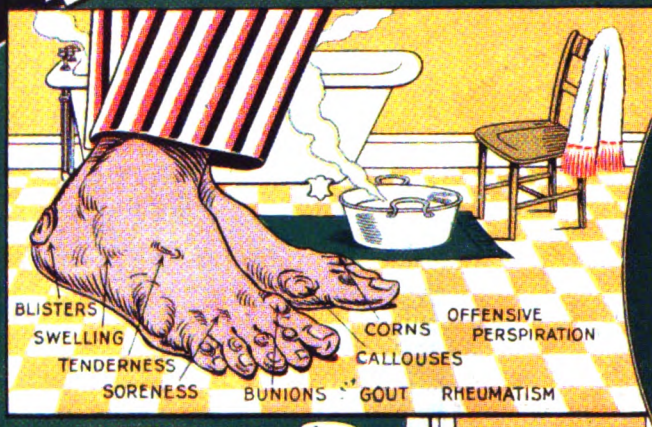
ANY FOOT TORTURES!

WHY HAVE THEM NOW?



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The Strand Magazine

FEBRUARY, 1923.

THE COTTINGLEY FAIRIES

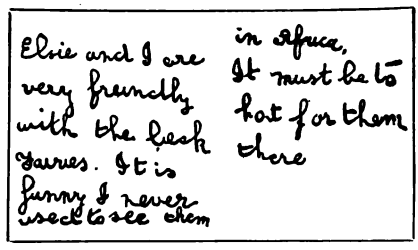
An Epilogue

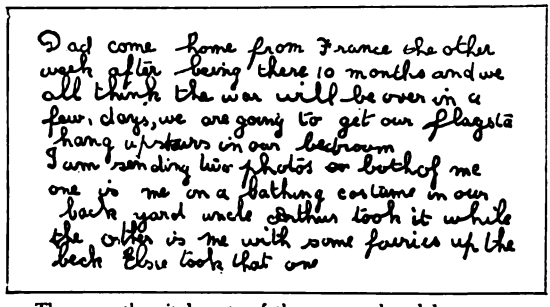
By A. CONAN DOYLE.

TWO years ago, without committing itself either to belief or to incredulity, THE STRAND MAGAZINE was the means of laying before the world the evidence as to the fairies seen and photographed by the two children of Cottingley. Since that time the facts have been collected in a volume and published by Messrs. Hodder and Stoughton under the title of "The Coming of the Fairies." There has been great discussion upon the point, and some critics have permitted themselves to be very hot and even rude upon the matter, but of solid argument there has been none, unless we are to regard it as an argument that it is a very extraordinary and incredible development, which is very true, but might equally be said of wireless and other modern discoveries. The fact that there has been no weak point found in the case is certainly not for want of looking for it, and the position of the children, and therefore of the fairies, is now a very strong one—though I have personally always stated that I was ready to consider any theory of thought forms which could be shown to meet the facts. The only theory which I would not discuss was the honesty of the children, for that I considered to be well attested.

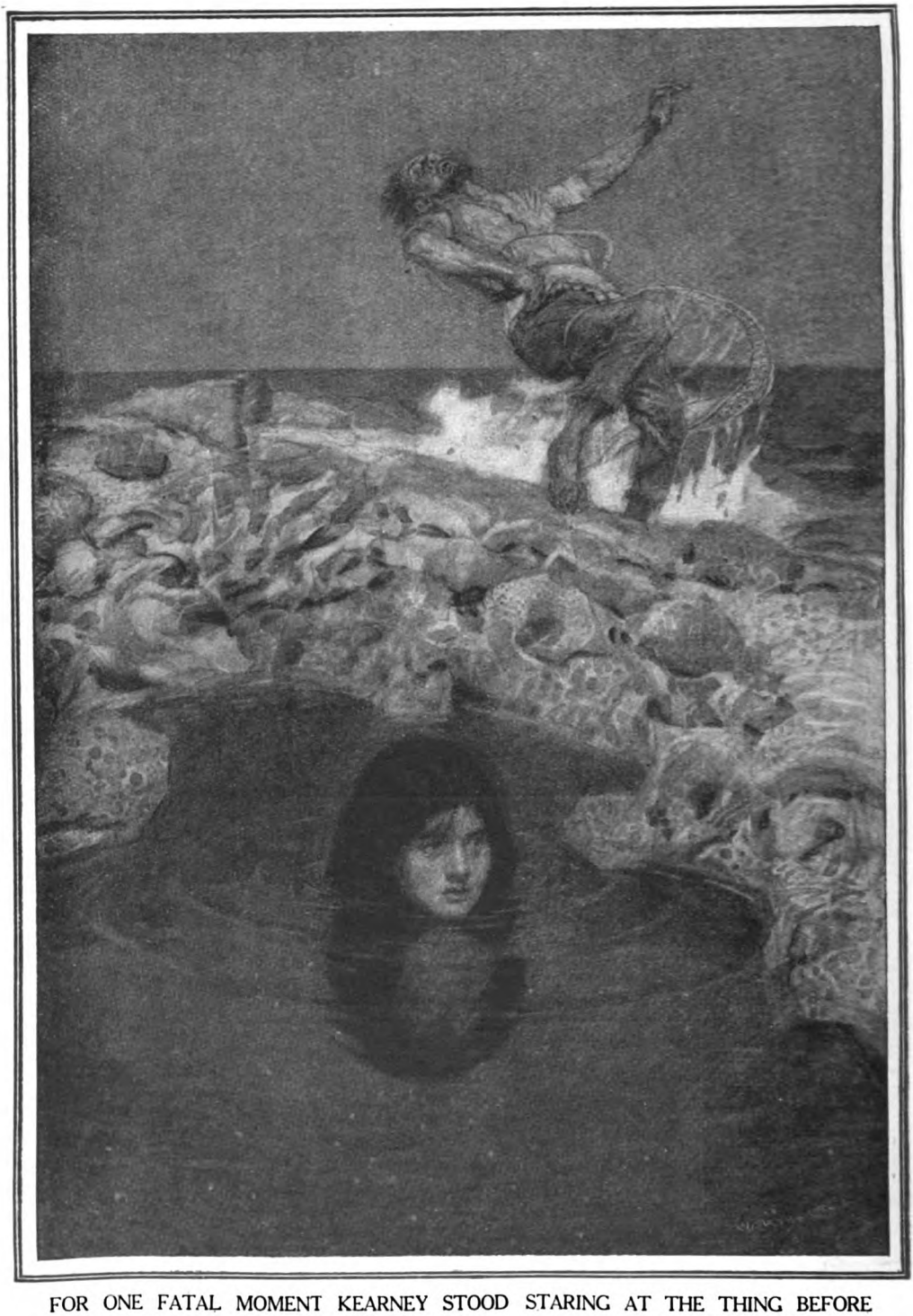
A curious corroboration of it has now come to hand through the courtesy of Mr. A. W. Wells, of the *Cape Argus*, who began as a complete sceptic and is still puzzled by the whole occurrence. He had written an article criticizing the fairies and reproducing one of the pictures. This reproduction came into the hands of a Miss Johanna Parvin, aged eighteen, living in a suburb of Cape Town. She wrote at once to say that little Francis, aged ten, had been a friend of hers before leaving South Africa and had written a post-card and a letter to her *at the time* in which she told her of those fairy pictures which were only rescued from oblivion two years later. The vital parts of these are here reproduced.

Such is the contribution which South Africa has made to the controversy. In my view it is a very important one. Mr. Maurice Hewlett, who has called the episode a "silly" one, and has cast ridicule on part of it because he professes to "understand children," will be able to tell us whether these child letters are faked, and, if so, why this little girl should take such pains to deceive her friend at the other side of the globe. Major Hall-Edwards may also have something to say. In fact, there are a good many apologies due to the children for criticism which could only mean that they were dishonest little wretches. That line of comment must now be definitely abandoned by every fair-minded critic, but what other one is open?


Elsie and I are very friendly with the beck Fairies. It is funny I never used to see them in Africa, It must be to hot for them there


Dad come home from France the other week after being there 10 months and we all think the war will be over in a few days, we are going to get our flagsta hang upstairs in our bedroom I am sending two photos on both of me one is me on a bathing costume in our back yard uncle Arthur took it while the other is me with some fairies up the beck Elsie took that one

These are the vital parts of the post-card and letter sent by one of the Cottingley children to her friend in South Africa two years before there was any discussion in this country on the subject of photographing fairies.



FOR ONE FATAL MOMENT KEARNEY STOOD STARING AT THE THING BEFORE HIM. THEN A ROPE SLASHED ROUND HIS WAIST AND TIGHTENED. HE WAS CAUGHT. KATAFA, SUBMERGED TO THE CHIN, WAITED AND LISTENED.

(See page 117.)

The Garden of God

A SEQUEL TO "THE BLUE LAGOON"

By

H. deVERE STACPOOLE

ILLUSTRATED BY W. HATHERELL, R.I.

FOREWORD.

Readers of "The Blue Lagoon" will recall that it described the casting ashore on an uninhabited isle in the South Seas of two children, Dick and Emmeline Lestrange—the son and niece of Arthur Lestrange. They grew up together in a wild, uncivilized state, fell in love, and drifted out to sea in a dinghy with their child. About the same time Lestrange, after years of searching, had at last learned of their whereabouts and was fast approaching the island in the *Raratonga*.

The sequel opens at the moment when he comes across the drifting dinghy. Dick and Emmeline are dead, but the child is still alive. He decides to settle on Palm Tree Island, the home of his dead children, with their child Dick and an old seaman named Kearney as his only companions. Here Dick thrives apace and the years pass uneventfully for the boy save for the disappearance of Lestrange and the gradual ageing of Kearney.

Then a great change comes into Dick's life. One morning he and Kearney are astonished to find a strange-built canoe drifting towards the island. They row out towards it, and as they approach and are hailed by the solitary occupant, Kearney cries out: "It's a girl!" The new-comer is Katafa, a girl of Spanish birth who has been reared from infancy by the natives of Karolin (an island far to the south-west) under extraordinary conditions. They had imposed upon her the terrible taboo of Taminan, which debars its victims from touching any human creature or being touched. Thus one might suddenly stretch out a hand to grasp or touch her, but would touch nothing—the art of avoidance was as natural and unconscious to Katafa as the art of walking.

The love story of this boy and girl will be found to be as full of romance and of striking and exciting adventure as the story of the boy's parents which proved so absorbing to readers of "The Blue Lagoon."

BOOK II. *(continued)*.

IX.

KEARNEY had put shelves in the house to hold the ships so that they did not interfere with the floor space where he slept with Dick. The shack behind the house where the provisions had been stored still held, though the roof had gone pretty much to pieces, and here the sailor had fixed the sleeping quarters of Katafa. Blankets had been given to them by the wreck, supplementing those left behind by Stanistreet, and, getting along for sundown, Kearney, with three blankets on his arm, two for a bed and one for a quilt, beckoned the girl to follow him.

She stopped short at the entrance to the shack and then took a step backwards, standing and watching him at his work.

Then, when he came out, he pointed to the blankets.

"There ain't no pills," said Kearney, "but

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you won't be mindin' that. Now, then, Kanaka girl, there's your bunk. Ain't you likin' the look of it ? "

She had drawn back another step.

" In with you," said Kearney, pointing to the couch.

She shook her head. Ask a fox to enter a trap.

" Well, then, you can just sleep in the trees," said he, and off he went round the house, leaving her to her choice.

Dick, tired out with the day, was in the house and sound asleep, and the sailor, who had a fishing line to overhaul, sat down by the door and set to work on it. As he sat busy with his fingers and reviewing with his mind Kanakas and their unaccountable ways, he saw the girl coming out from the trees. She had fished two of the blankets out of the shack and she was crossing the sward with them towards the canoe that was tied to the bank. She got into the canoe with them and vanished from sight—all but her head, which was visible in the sunset light above the bank.

Now, Kearney had old-fashioned ideas as to how young people should behave towards their elders, and Dick had received many a " clip " from him for disobedience. He was starting to " go after " the girl when he saw two hands go up to her head. She was arranging her hair. One might have fancied her before a mirror.

This sight checked him. He finished his work, put the line away and retired to the house. During their many years of residence the house had almost been destroyed by a big blow from the north-west, and Kearney in rebuilding had enlarged it.

Kearney was worried. Living in ease and quietude one might fancy worry his last visitant, but that was not so ; quite small things, things he would never have given a second thought to on shipboard, had the power to upset him here, and though he would not have changed his mode of life for worlds, a broken fishing line or a leak in the dinghy would make him grumpy for hours, cursing his fate and wondering what was going to happen next.

Katafa was worrying him now—she was unlike any Kanaka he had ever seen. Where had she come from ? Was it from that island he guessed to be lying down south there ? And if so, might she not bring others of her kind after her ? Then the way she had slipped from under his hand, and those eyes of hers which she kept fixed on him—she wasn't right.

He dropped off to sleep with this conviction in his mind and dreamt troublous dreams, awaking about two in the morning to wonder what she was doing and whether everything was secure. Then, sleep driven away, he came out into the windless, starry night, where a six days' old moon was lolling above the trees.

Away out to sea a red flicker met his gaze. A fire was burning on the reef. Trumpets blowing in the night could not have astonished him more.

He watched for a moment as the flame waxed and waned, now casting a trail of red light on the lagoon water, now dying down only to leap up again. Then he came running to the canoe. The girl was not there and the dinghy was gone : the paddle was gone from the canoe also ; she must have taken it to paddle herself over to the reef, not being able to use the sculls.

There was plenty of dried weed and bits of wreckage on the reef to make a fire with, but how had she got a light ? He came back to the house and searched for the box of matches on the little shelf outside where it was always put when done with. It was gone.

She must have come " smelling round " when they were asleep ; she must have noticed where the matches had been put and treasured up the fact in her dark mind !

" But what in the nation's she done it for ? " asked Kearney of himself as he stood scratching his head. " What's she up to, anyway ? "

He came to the trees on the other side of the sward and watched for an hour, till at last the fire died to a spark and the spark vanished.

Then came the sound of the paddle as the dinghy stole like a beetle across the starshot lagoon water and tied up at the bank. A figure passed along the bank towards the house : she was putting the matchbox back. Then she came along towards the canoe, slipped into it, and vanished from sight.

Kearney waited ten minutes, then he stole back to the house and turned in again.

" You wait till the mornin' and *I'll* l'arn you," said he to himself as he closed his eyes, composing his mind to slumber with the thought of the whacking in store for the Kanaka girl.

X.

KATAFA, when she had arranged her hair and made her bed of blankets in the bottom of the canoe, lay down, but she did not close her eyes. She lay watching the last glow of the sunset, and then the instantly following stars held her gaze, talking to her of Karolin and the great sea spaces she had been suddenly caught away from.

The atoll island has never been adequately described by pen or brush—never will be. What brush or pen could paint the starlight on the great lagoons, the sunrises and sunsets, the vastness of the distances unbroken by any land but just the low ring of reef ? Life on an atoll is like life on a raft, immensity on every side—and the sea.

Here the girl felt herself suddenly shut in ; the groves rising to the hill-top fretted her spirit, the bit of lagoon was nothing, and even the reef was different to the reef of Karolin. Kearney had raised something deep down in her mind against him, and he seemed somehow now the centre and core of all her trouble. Dick

she scarcely thought of; he, like other human beings, was of little account to her.

Thoughts came to her of trying to get the canoe out and escaping back to the freedom which was the only thing she loved, but it was hopeless, she could never do the business single-handed. She was trapped and she knew it.

Now, when Le Juan wanted help from Nanawa, the shark-toothed god, she had several methods of invoking the deity. One of the simplest was by fire. She would go off, build a little fire, and, as she fed it, repeat over it a formula, always the same string of words, representing the wish of her heart which was never spoken.

Something generally happened after that; sometimes the wish would be granted, long overdue rain would come, or some enemy already dying would die, or the palu that had forsaken for awhile the palu bank would come back.

But the shark-toothed one was a tricky deity, and had a habit of sending other gifts along by way of Lagniappe.

For instance, in that great drought long years ago, Le Juan had sacrificed stacks of fuel to the god, and weeks after he had sent the rain, but he also sent the Spanish ship with Katafa on board of it, and Katafa had given Le Juan a lot of trouble and heart searching.

Again, two years ago he had sent the palu back to the bank, but at the same time he had extended by a fortnight the season in the lagoon when the fish were poisonous.

Sometimes he was quite amiable and would cure an indigestion without killing the patient as well, but it was all a toss-up. He was a dark force, and even Le Juan recognized in a dim way that she was playing with evil and was never easy till the effects of her invocations were over and done with. Katafa had often helped to stoke the little fires, and she knew the ritual in all its simplicity. The thing had never interested her much till now.

Maybe Nanawa could help her, take the island away or knock it to pieces without hurting her, or lift it like a dish cover to the sky as she had seen it lifted by mirage, or free her in some way—any way.

She brooded for an hour or more over this business. Then, having made up her mind, she rose, skipped lightly on to the bank and, moving silently as a shadow, approached the house. She could tell by their breathing that the occupants were asleep, and she could see the box of matches on the little shelf in the moonlight.

She took it, and as she held the strange fire box in her hand the sudden impulse came to her, maybe from the shark-toothed one, to fire the house. The mysterious antagonism against Kearney urged her to destroy him; it seemed also a way out of her trouble.

The little ships saved the sleepers.

The remembrance of them suddenly came to the girl, and the thought that some god of whom they were the insignia might be on the watch. She could not see them in the darkness of the house, but they were doubtless there on their shelves, put there to protect the sleepers just as Le Juan hung over her bed-place a shrunken human hand. Maybe she was right, and that Kearney, without knowing, had placed them there under higher direction; but, right or wrong, the things acted as efficiently as a spell. She turned away and, taking the paddle from the canoe, unmoored the dinghy and pushed off for the reef.

She found, as she had expected, plenty of fuel, and the matchbox gave her no trouble. She had watched the process of striking a match carefully with those eyes from which no detail escaped, and in a minute the stuff she had collected was alight and burning.

Then, standing in the windless night and piling on dead weed, bits of wood and dried fish fragments that popped and blazed like gas jets, Katafa, with hands pressed against her ridi so that the flames might not catch its dracæna leaves, put up her prayers to the shark-toothed one, repeating the old formula of Le Juan and backing it with the unspoken wish that the island might be taken away and freedom restored to her.

An hour later she returned across the lagoon, tied up the dinghy, and, snuggling down in the canoe, went asleep.

XI.

"NOW, then, Dick, I'ave her alone and don't get lookin' at her," said Mr. Kearney. "She's been misbehavin'."

"What's she been doin', Jim?" asked the boy.

"Playin' with the matches," replied the other, thinking it just as well not to go into full particulars, that were sure to bring a string of Dick's endless questions.

They were seated at breakfast and Katafa had drawn close for her food. Katafa could be ugly, she could be pretty; never was anything more protean than the looks of this Spanish girl who was yet, in all things but birth and blood, a Kanaka. This morning, as she sat in the liquid shadow of the trees, she was unpaintably beautiful. She had run away beyond the cape of wild coco nuts and taken a dip in the lagoon, and now, fresh from sleep and her bath, with a red flower in her hair and her hands folded in her lap, she sat like the incarnation of dawn, her luminous eyes fixed on Kearney.

But Kearney had no eye for her beauty.

"When was she playin' with them, Jim?" asked the boy, a piece of baked bread fruit in his fingers.

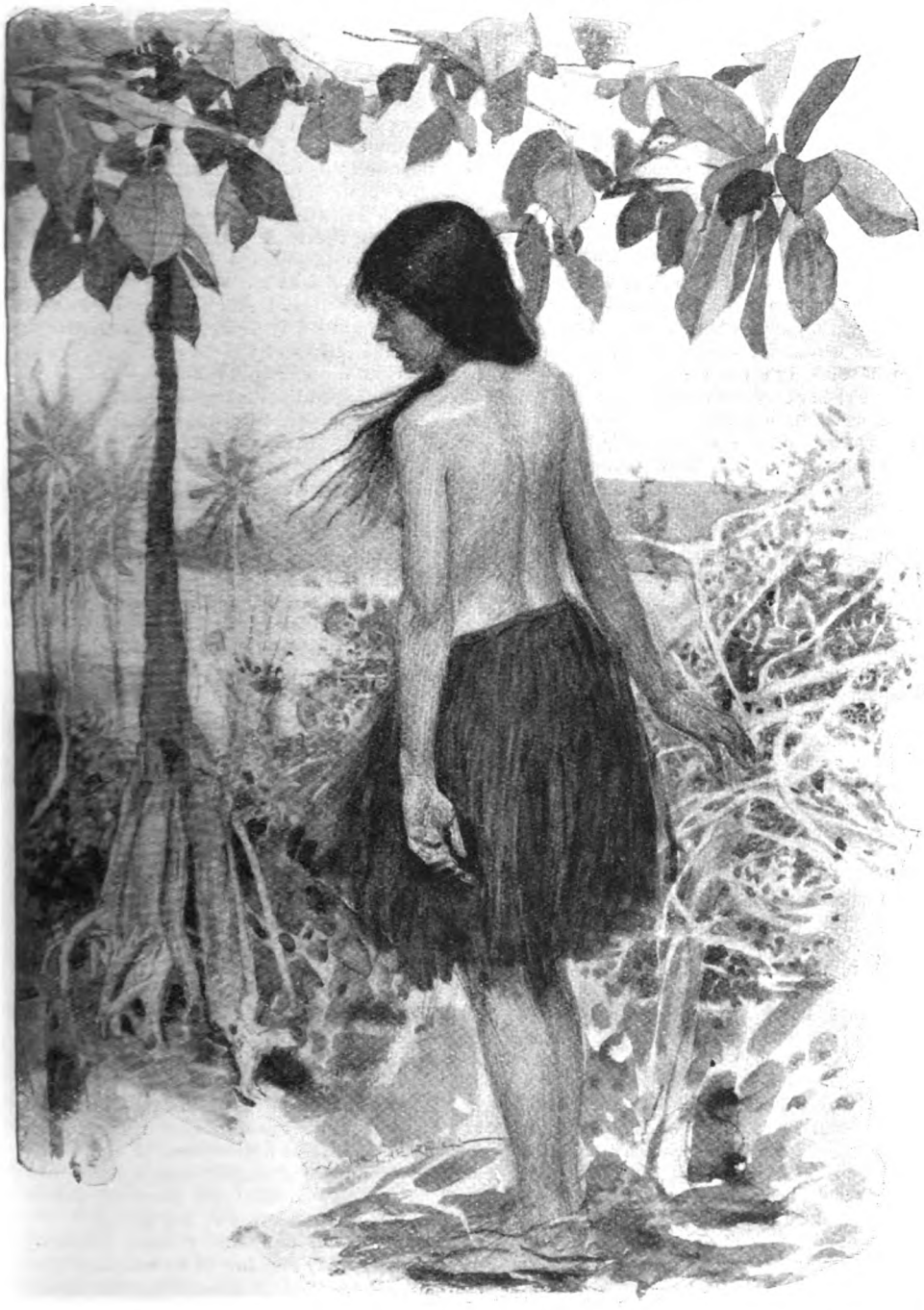
"Never you mind," replied the other. "Get on with your breakfast and hand us that plate. I'll l'arn her."

Katafa stopped short at the entrance to the shack and then took a step backwards, standing and watching Kearney at his work.

He passed a plateful of food to the girl and then helped himself and the meal proceeded, Dick attending to business, but with an occasional side glance at the criminal.

Playing with the matches was a hideous offence for which he had been whacked twice in earlier days. He reckoned Kearney would whack her, and he looked forward to the business with an interest tinged, but not in the least unsharpened, by his sneaking sympathy with the offence and the offender.

But, the meal finished, the sailor, instead of setting to, simply walked to the dinghy, beckoning the girl to follow him. He got in, took the



sculls, and as she stepped after him, taking her seat gingerly in the stern sheets, pushed off. The pair landed on the reef, Kearney leading the way and glancing about him till they came on the remains of the fire.

"Now," said Kearney, halting and pointing to the ashes and the scorched coral, "that's what you've been doin', is it? What made you light that fire for—eh?"

Although the language of Kearney was to her as double Dutch to a Chinese, she knew quite well his drift. He had discovered the fact that she had

lit the fire. How? Maybe the god of the little ships had told him. She said nothing, however, as he went on, his voice rising in anger with every word.

"What made you touch them matches for, smellin' round when I was asleep and makin' off with the matches? I'll l'arn you."

He picked up a stalk of seaweed and made a "skelp" at her. She was quite close, and it was impossible to miss her; all the same the stalk touched nothing. She had skipped aside.

Trees had once grown here on the reef and the coral was smooth, and round and about this smooth patch Kearney, blazing with righteous wrath, pursued her. It was like trying to whip the wind. He tried to drive her on to the rough coral, but she wasn't to be caught like that; she kept to the smooth and in three or four minutes he was done.

Flinging the stick of seaweed away he wiped his brow with his arms. Dick was watching them from the sward and he felt that he had been making a fool of himself.

"Now never you do that no more," said Mr. Kearney, shaking his finger at her. "If you do, b'gosh, I'll skelp you roun' the island." He nodded his head to give force to this tremendous threat, and was turning to the dinghy when something caught his eye.

Away to the east across the sparkling blue stood a sail.

The dead calm had broken an hour ago, and a merry breeze was whipping up the swell. The ship, lying beyond the drift current, must have been within sight of the island all night. Had she seen the fire?

Kearney, shading his eyes, stood watching her. A splash from the lagoon made him turn. Katafa had taken to the water, ridi and all, and was swimming back to the shore, evidently determined not to trust herself with him in the dinghy. He looked at her for a moment as she swam, then he turned his gaze back to the ship.

She showed now, square-rigged and close-hauled. Yes, she was beating up for the island. Would she put in at the break? Was she a whaler, a sandal-wood trader, or what?

In those days of Pease and Steinberger, a ship in Pacific waters had many possibilities, and if Kearney had known that he was watching the *Portsoy*, captained by Collin Robertson, who feared neither God nor the Paumotus, he would not have waited on the reef so calmly.

No, she was not making for the break, but to pass the island close to northward. She was no whaler, and, relieved of this dread, he stuck to his post as she came, every sail drawing, listed to starboard with the press of the wind and the foam bursting from her forefoot.

Now she was nearly level with him, less than a quarter of a mile away; he could see the busy decks, and a fellow running up the ratlins, and at the sight of the striped shirts and the old familiar crowd, the sticks and ropes, the white painted deck-house, and the sun on the bellying canvas, Kearney, forgetting ease and comfort and the hundred good gifts God had bestowed on him, sobriety included, sprang into the air and flung up his arms and yelled like a lunatic.

The answer came prompt in a burst of sound, like the outcrying of gulls; the helm went over, and the brig, curving under the thrashing canvas, presented her stern to the damned castaway on the reef. He saw the glint of a long brass gun, a plume of smoke bellying over the blue sea, and, as the wind of the shot went over him, the report shook the reef like the blow of a giant's fist, passing across the lagoon to wake the echoes of the groves.

Aimed at nothing, fired for the fun of the thing, the shot had yet found its mark, bursting the canoe of Katafa into fifty pieces.

XII.

ISLAND life had not quickened Mr. Kearney's intellectual powers and for eight or nine months after that day things happened to him that he could not account for. Sometimes fishing-lines broke that ought not to have broken; he would leave a bit of chewing-gum on the shelf outside the house and it would be gone, taken by the birds maybe—but why did the birds suddenly develop a desire for gum? The dinghy sprang a leak that took him two days to mend, and fish spears would become mysteriously blunted, though put away apparently sharp enough.

He never thought of the girl. The feud between them had died down, at least on his part, and she and Dick seemed to be getting on well together. Too well, perhaps, from a civilized person's point of view. She and Dick could chatter away together now in the native; the girl had picked up at first enough English to help them along, but at the end of nine months it was always the language of Karolin they spoke, and even to Kearney's heavy intelligence it was funny to hear them "clacking away" and to think that she had made him talk her lingo instead of the other way about.

More than that, the boy was altering, losing the fits of abstraction that had made him seem at times almost the reincarnation of his mother, losing also the light-heartedness of the child; laughing rarely, and desperately serious over the little things of life; the moment seemed to him everything, as it is to the savage.

"She's turning him into a dam' Kanaka," grumbled Kearney one day as he watched them starting for the reef, Dick with his fish spears over his shoulder, the girl following him. "Ain't to hold or bind these days, and sulks if he's spoke to crooked or crossed in his vagaries. Well, if he ain't careful I'll l'arn him for once and all."

But he never put the threat in action; too lazy, maybe, or too dispirited, feeling himself a

back number. He was. The reins had gone out of his hands, youth had pushed him aside, and the boy, moving away towards savagery, had left this relict of high civilization a good piece astern.

But one day Kearney was roused out of his apathy. Resting in the tree shadows at the opposite side of the sward, he saw the girl, who fancied herself alone and unobserved, cautiously approaching the house. Never for one single day since her landing had she lost the desire to escape, to find freedom and the great spaces of the sea; her intercourse with Dick had attached her neither to Dick nor the island, yet beyond playing tricks upon Kearney she had shown no sign of the fret that lay in her soul.

The cannon-shot from the *Portsoy* that had burst the canoe in pieces and the report of the gun that had rolled in echoes from the woods—these in her firm belief were the manifestations of the power and the voice of the shark-toothed one. Just as firmly she believed that some other god had intervened, frustrating the doings of Nanawa and spoiling the canoe out of spite.

The idea had come to her that maybe it was the god who presided over the little ships, that if she got rid of them—not all at once, for that might make a disturbance with the god, but one by one—the way might be clear.

Kearney had never suspected her of stealing and throwing away his gum, of breaking the fishing lines or blunting the spears, and if she took these things off into the wood one by one and smashed them he would be equally stupid and unsuspicious—perhaps.

It was worth trying, and to-day, finding herself alone, she stole up to the house and peeped in. There they stood in the twilight on their shelves, the things whose god had broken her canoe. Impudent, unbroken themselves, and no doubt manned by sprites, they stood—the schooner, the frigate, a full-rigged ship, and a tiny whaleman with bluff bow, wooden davits, crow's nest, and try works, all complete.

An old knife of Kearney's lay on the little shelf by the door beside the box of matches. She could not resist that. Leaving the matches untouched, she picked up the knife and flung it into the lagoon. Then she entered the house and lifted the whaleman from its shelf. It was the smallest, and it was just as well to begin with the smallest. She turned to the door with it and saw Kearney running across the sward, dropped the whaler, sprang from the doorway, and ran. Another half minute and she would have been trapped.

Kearney, on seeing her entering the house, had made a bolt from the trees on the opposite side, thinking he had her bottled, but he was too late, and, as for chasing her, he might as well have tried to course a hare. Stopping suddenly and picking up Dick's tia wood ball, which was lying in his way, he took aim at her as she ran, catching her full in the small of the back as she dived into the trees.

The sound of the smack of the ball, followed by a gasping cry, came back to him. Then she vanished, traceless but for the swaying leaves.

"That will l'arn you," said Mr. Kearney, turning to the house and picking up the whaler, undamaged but for a broken main-topmast. He knew now who had stolen his gum, blunted the spears and outraged the dinghy; the flinging of that knife into the lagoon had told him everything, and as he sat down by the door to repair the broken spar he took an oath to be even with her.

"Break the fish lines, would you?" said he, as he sat with the whaler clipped between his knees as in a vice and his fingers busy unrigging the mast. "Fling me knife into the water—well, you wait. Not another bite or sup will you have that you don't get yourself, or me name's not Jim Kearney. Not another bite or sup till you go down on your marrow bones and beg me pardon." He worked away, his soul raging in him, his mind fumbling round and remembering other things to be laid to her account. Rope that had vanished, a saw that had gone west, spirited off as if by pixies—he had put these levitations down to his own carelessness or forgetfulness, quite unable to imagine a human being's tricky malevolence as the agent.

As he worked, the splash of oars came from the lagoon, and Dick landed with three red-backed bream strung on a length of liana. Seeing Kearney alone, he looked round for Katafa, but could see no sign of her.

"Where's she gone?" asked Dick.

Kearney looked up—the back number had taken fire at last. "Get off with you and don't be askin' me questions," he shouted, just as if he were speaking to a man, not a boy. "Go'n' look for her if you want to find her, throwin' me knife in the water and smashin' me lines; the pair of you is one as bad as the other; always tinkerin' together, you and her."

The boy drew back, staring at the other with wide-pupilled eyes.

"What's she been doin'?" he asked.

"Doin'!" cried Kearney. "I've told you what she's been doin'. Go'n' hunt for her in the wood if you want to know what she's been doin'. Well you know what she's been doin', standin' there like the damned Kanaka she's turned you into and askin' me what's she been doin'. Clear off with you."

The boy flung down the fish and started off, running towards the trees to the right of the sward. As he vanished Kearney heard his voice crying out in the native: "Katafa, hai! ama oi Katafa, hai, hai!"

"Damned Kanaka," grumbled Kearney.

Katafa, deep in the gloom of the groves, heard the call, but she made no answer. Her mind was in a turmoil.

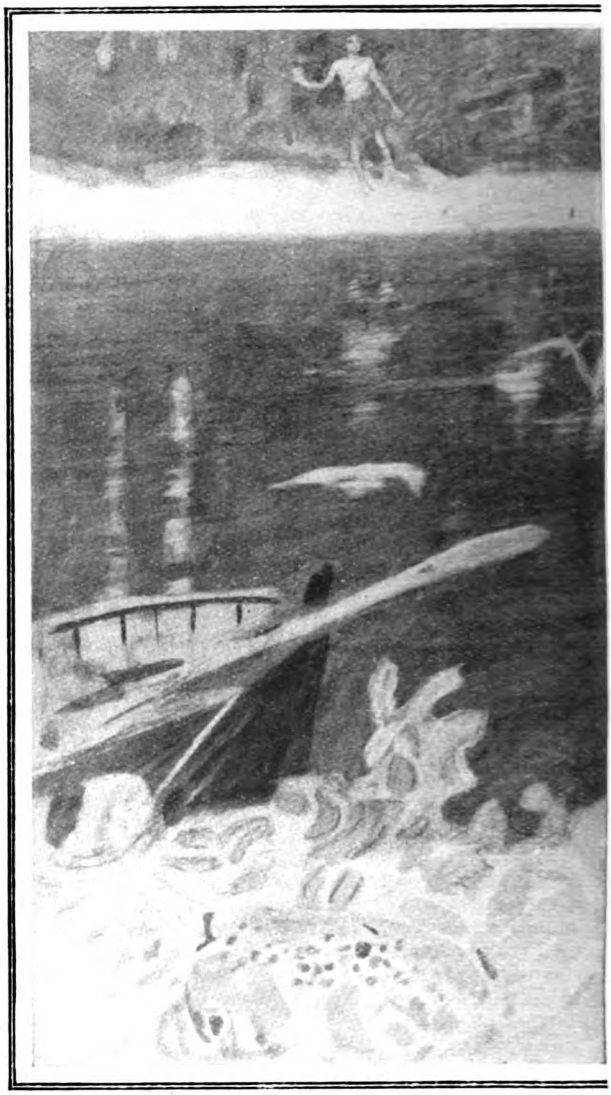
Once, long ago on Karolin, a stone thrown by a child had struck her accidentally, rousing in the dark part of her mind a confusion and resentment that almost upset her reason. As in the case of Kearney, the child had been behind her, she had not seen the stone coming and the sudden blow was as though someone had struck her with a fist. It was the ame now. Though she had recognized instantly that it was only the ball that had struck her, the shock remained.

She stood for a while listening to the far-off calling of Dick. "Katafa, hai! amanoi Katafa, hai!" It grew fainter; he was taking the wrong direction, and now, with the suddenness of a clapped door, silence cut him off.

That was a trick of the woods, caused maybe by the upward trend of the land—a person calling to you and moving away in a horizontal direction would suddenly be cut off.

Katafa had never been alone in the woods before this; she had always gone accompanied by either the boy or Kearney. Never had she grown accustomed to these vast masses of trees, their gloom, their congregated perfumes, the strange lights and shadows made by the moving branches and fronds, the sense of being surrounded; always amongst them the great distances of the atoll cried louder to her to come back, and the heartache and home-sickness grew more intense.

But to-day she had lost her fear of the trees and the call of Karolin had lost for awhile its power. The outrage committed by Kearney had shaken her away from all other considerations, all other pictures but that of the first man who had struck her.



Kearney picked up a stalk of seaweed and made a "skelp"

She moved away to the right and entered an alley formed by a double line of matamata trees; ferns grew here on either side, and above, in the liquid gloom, cables of liantasse swung powdered with starry blossoms.

She stood for a moment glancing up at the orchids that seemed like birds in flight, the bugles of the giant convolvuli, and the far-off roof of leaves moving to the wind in trembles of shattered light and shadow.

Then she went on, reaching at last a little bay in the trees, ferns and bushes where the glint of something white caught her eye. It was a skull. She pushed the leaves aside. The whole skeleton was there, the ribs still articulated, the vertebræ intact. Flame lit by mortal hand could not have calcined the bones more whitely, destroyed the flesh more completely than the slow fire of Time burning here through the years amidst the cool green ferns.

Katafa, holding the leaves aside, gazed at the skull. Amongst Le Juan's properties had been a man's skull used when she was invoking the dark powers against some enemy.

As Katafa gazed at the skull, the thought of Kearney came to her, and the vision of him lying like that—and the wish.

XIII.

WHEN Dick came back to the house the girl had not returned.

Kearney seemed to have recovered his

at her. She was quite close—all the same the stalk touched nothing. She had skipped aside.

temper, and presently he helped the boy to prepare supper. They scarcely spoke over this business; the shadow of the quarrel still hung between them, and that supper, as they sat silent opposite one another, was a landmark in the life of Dick. It was his coming-of-age party, for Kearney was treating him as a man with whom he had a difference, not as a boy to be threatened and skelped.

Dick, sitting there in the sunset this evening, was no longer a child; not quite a man, he was greater than a man, fresh from the hand of Nature that had moulded and wrought on his father and mother; not quite civilized, not quite a savage, a poet might have seen in him the youth of the world, the dawn of man before cities arose to cast their shadows on him, before civilization created savages.

Neither of them saw the long years of companionship during which they had worked as ship-builders together, the storms and incidents by shore and reef—it was all as naught. Katafa had brought a new interest to Dick. Age and laziness had done their work with Kearney.

As they sat like this, the meal nearly finished, they saw the girl; she had come out from among the trees away on the other side of the sward. She was carrying something under her arm. She stood for a moment shading her eyes against the sunset and looking towards them, then she vanished back amongst the trees, and Dick, rising to his feet, came running across the

sward. He knew where to find her. Since the breaking of the canoe, she had made a shack for herself amongst the trees, and there she was crouched now and dimly to be seen in the fading light.

At the sound of the parting of the leaves, she moved suddenly as if trying to hide something with her body.

"Katafa," said the boy, speaking in the native, "the food is waiting for you, and he is no longer angry."

"It does not matter, Taori," replied her voice from the shadows. "I will eat to-morrow."

"What is that you have beneath you there?"

"A bread-fruit, Taori; I want no better food."

"Ahai, but you have no fire to cook it."

"It does not matter, Taori; I will cook it to-morrow."

"Then eat it raw," said he, angry with her, and off he went.

Taori was the name she had given him.

When he had gone she took the skull which she had been hiding and placed it beside her, then she lay down with her eyes fixed on the ruddy-tinted light of the sunset visible through the spaces of the leaves.

THERE was no moon that night, and a dead calm had set in an hour before sunset. The heat was oppressive; even the great Pacific seemed drugged and drowsy, and the sound of the surf on the reef the breathing of a sleeper uneasy in his sleep.

Kearney, awaking about midnight, came out for a breath of air. It was almost as oppressive out of doors as in the house, and above the trees the sky, heavy with stars, stood like the roof of a jewelled oven; the fronds of a palmetto by the water stood without a tremor, and the lagoon lay like a fallen sky of stars, tremorless as space itself.

Kearney came down to the bank, and sat bathing his feet in the water, the ripples waving out and shattering the reflected firmament. Then as he lay on his elbow, yawning and half asleep, a spark of light that was not a star struck his sight. It was on the reef line. It died out, came to life again, flickered, and grew. Someone was lighting a fire on the reef. He sat up, glanced at the dinghy lying safely at her moorings, then out away at the far-off fire.

"She ain't taken the boat," said he to himself. "She must have got over swimmin' Curse that Kanaka! What trick is she up to, anyway, signiling? That's what she's after—signiling, that's her game, maybe to bring a hive of niggers atop of us."

He rushed off to see if the box of matches had been taken. No it was there; but he knew she could light a fire with a fire-stick. She had taught Dick to do it. He came running back to the dinghy, got in, unmoored her, and pushed out.

He had always had it in his mind that the fire she had lit long ago was a signal made to attract her people, whoever they might be. The absurdity of this idea never struck him. He just "had it in his mind" as an easy way of accounting for the matter, and to-night, in face of this second offence, his wrath rose up against the girl as it had never risen before.

Guiding the dinghy across the water, he was steering straight for murder. Not intentional murder, but the murder we come on in the slums when men of Kearney's type, urged to the deed by a nagging wife or gone-wrong daughter, and assisted maybe by alcohol, suddenly give loose rein to themselves and maim or kill.

His project was to land unobserved if possible, and then go for her with a scull, bowl her over, and then beat the devil out of her once and for all with his fists. He'd "l'arn" her this time, sure.

Less than half-way across he drew in his sculls, and then, with a single scull at the stern, began working the boat almost noiselessly towards the reef. He could see her now standing by the fire and feeding it, the cairngorm light of the flames upon her face and arms. It was a big fire, and lit the reef, the lagoon water, and the foam of the gently-curving waves. Great fish, attracted by the light, were swimming in the waters of the lagoon, nosing about the reef. The news had gone far and wide that something was doing, and could Nature, who has her own methods of warning men and beasts, have expressed herself in writing, with fire for ink, above the breaking foam would have appeared the words: "The reef is dangerous to-night."

Then, as Kearney drew closer, the girl, who had suddenly turned and sighted him, broke away from the fire and ran.

He drew in the scull, took his seat, and, seizing the other scull, rowed as if rowing a race. The nose of the dinghy crushed against the coral. He sprang out, secured her, and turned, scull in hand.

The girl was gone.

Beyond the fire glow he thought he saw her for a moment, but the light dazzled his eyes, and when he put it behind him he could see nothing but the starlit coral, its humps and dips and pools, the foam of the waves, and the tranquil mirror of the lagoon.

He knew quite well what had become of her; she had dipped into one of the reef pools; they were the only possible places of concealment. She had not taken to the lagoon, he could see that at a glance, for the water lay unrippled, and a swimmer's head would have shown as clearly as by day. He came along grasping the scull, with the anger of the balked hunter now at his heart. He looked into the first

great pool—nothing, only a trapped fish flitting like a ghost here and there.

He rose and was moving on when a great undulation came in the lagoon water flowing from behind him and spreading to the west. Kearney turned. The fire still gave a good light, and between him and the fire something had heaved itself on to the coral. Attracted by the firelight, it had left the lagoon soundless as a crawling cat, yet tons in weight. It was only some thirty feet away from him, yet it seemed formless, a long heaped mass covered with shiny tarpaulin. Then suddenly it took form, extending itself like a slug; lamps like the headlights of a locomotive blazed out, and around the lamps great serpents curled like the locks of Medusa. For one fatal moment he stood staring at the thing before him. Then a rope slashed round his waist and tightened.

He was caught.

Katafa had taken refuge in the second great pool, a pool some few feet deep and large enough for a person to swim in. The water was tepid and the floor of soft sand, and as she slipped into it, gracile as a serpent, she did not look to see what fish there might be there. A small whip-ray, an electric eel, or a stinging jelly fish would have made the pool untenable, she knew, but chanced it, and, submerged to the chin, waited and listened.

She felt an eel pass like a cold waving ribbon over her thighs; it touched the outer side of her left leg as it made its way along the sand and was gone. Then she felt the tap of small, sharp-pointed fingers here and there on her body. Fish were nuzzling her, yet she dared not move for dread of setting the water waving. Instinct told her that Kearney was more to be feared than fish or eels or the great crab of the reef, and even when a sting like a hot needle sticking in her side told her that a banda fish had attacked her flesh, her only movement was the drift of her right hand like floating seaweed towards her side, and the sudden snap of the fingers as the banda fish, caught by the hand, was crushed to death.

She kneaded the fragments viciously between her fingers; then, as she released them, sudden and sharp came a cry, the piercing cry of a man who has been speared or stabbed with a shark-tooth dagger. Raising her head swift as a lizard, she glanced, shuddered, and dived again. She had seen Nanawa.

Katafa knew the seas and its creatures with an intimacy given to few naturalists. She had seen great fleets of giant whip rays enter Karolin lagoon, disporting under the stars and filling the night with a sound like the thunder of big guns at battle practice. She had seen a cachalot driven by destroyers to its death and an octopus with sixty-feet tentacles floating like a burst balloon near the palu bank, driven up from mile-deep water by some submarine disturbance, the sharks tearing at it and the eyes still living, lugubrious and staring at the sky as if in astonishment. But she had never seen the most terrible of all sea things, the giant decapod, barrel-shaped, great as an oak tree, with two beaks, a tongue armed with teeth, eyes a foot broad, and ten tentacles, two of thirty or forty feet in length.

Snuggling into the tepid water she lay listening—noting only the sound of the surf rising and falling to the pulse of the sea, whilst the untroubled stars shone down on her and the minutes passed, bringing not a whisper to tell of what was happening—of what had happened.

Then, raising herself gently, she looked again. The reef showed nothing but the last embers of the fire. The dinghy was lying still just where she had been moored, but of the man who had brought her across there was no trace.

XIV.

"JIM!" cried Dick; "hai amanoi—Jim! Where you gone to?"

He was standing before the house in the early sunlight; he had just come out and Kearney was nowhere to be seen. A breeze had broken the heat, and the absolute loveliness of the morning found reflection in the soul of the boy.

The far-off sea, that would be purple at noon, lay like smashed sapphires beyond the reef; the lagoon whipped by the breeze showed colours unimaginable by man, colours that seemed to live by their own intrinsic brilliancy, stretching from the luminous blue of the near pools to the purples and mauves of the submerged rotten coral beyond which lay the dancing sapphire that washed the reef line. Over all, the breeze, the flower-blue sky, and the gulls.

But Kearney was nowhere to be seen.

Then, as Dick called again, the girl came out from the trees at the opposite side of the sward, fresh from a dip in the lagoon beyond the cape and with a scarlet flower in her hair, which was tied back with a bit of thread liana.

She crossed the sward, and the boy, seeing her, bothered himself no longer about Kearney and set to preparing for breakfast. Had he not been so busy he might have noticed a difference in her. She walked assuredly and with a carelessness and an ease that were new to her. In ordinary times she would come for her food as an animal might come, an animal not quite tamed and vaguely distrustful, take her seat at a little distance, and wait meekly yet watchfully for the dispensations of Providence. It was different now.

She came close up to Dick, and, without offering in the least to help, stood watching him, taking her seat when the meal was ready as close as "Kea'ney" had sat, and helping herself to the food without waiting to be helped.

Even Dick, satisfying his voracious appetite, noticed the change in her now. He did not know what it was in the least, and he didn't

bother to think, yet in some curious way it disturbed him.

With Kearney there he and Katafa had always been subordinates; between subordinates there is always a bond—a league, however vague and unwritten, against the master. Youth had helped, and the two had made a little society of their own with Dick as leader. This relationship had been strangely disturbed this morning by the absence of Kearney and by the actions of Katafa, who was doing things she had never done before, sitting in a different attitude, and speaking in a new tone of assurance and indifference. Dick almost felt that something had happened to himself—something had.

She had been accustomed to help in clearing away after meals, but this morning she just sat and watched. There was not much clearing to be done, but Kearney had always been particular that no scraps or fish bones were left about to bring the robber crabs round scavenging, or the gulls; a dirty camp has always followers, so the scraps were shot into the lagoon; then the plates had to be cleaned and put away on their shelf in the house.

Dick, thinking she was maybe lazy or tired, did not bother; he finished his business and stamped out the fire, reckoning that if Kearney wanted food when he came back he could cook it for himself. But where had Kearney gone to, and why was he so long away?

He had not taken the dinghy; the little boat was moored at its usual place by the bank; he must have gone off in the woods.

"Katafa," said Dick, after running to the boat to see if Kearney had taken the fishing-tackle, always kept in a little locker in the stern sheets, "what makes Kearney so long away? He has not taken the lines to fish with from the boat."

"Perhaps," said Katafa, "he is on the reef."

"No," replied the boy, "for he has not taken the boat."

"Perhaps he is among the tall trees."

Dick half-shook his head as if in doubt. Then, raising his voice, he cried again:—

"Hai, amanoi—Jim! Hai! Hai!"

A far-off echo in the trees caught the hail and sent it back. "Hai! hai!" faint, yet clear, came the echo, dying off to a silence troubled only by the sound of the reef.

"He answers," said Katafa, "but he is too far away, he cannot come."

There was a grove on the south beach of Karolin that had an echo; call there and you would hear the spirits of the departed answering you, jeering you in your own voice. She did not believe that the spirit of Kearney was answering Dick; some old spirit of the grove, maybe, but not Kearney. She knew that Kearney was not among the trees and she spoke in mockery.

Dick knew that it was only an echo. He gave another shout, and then, dropping the business as a bad job, and Kearney from his mind, ran off to the boat to overhaul the fishing-tackle. When he had finished he came back for her to go fishing, and found her busy with a huge old grandfather coco-nut and one of the knives salved from the wreck.

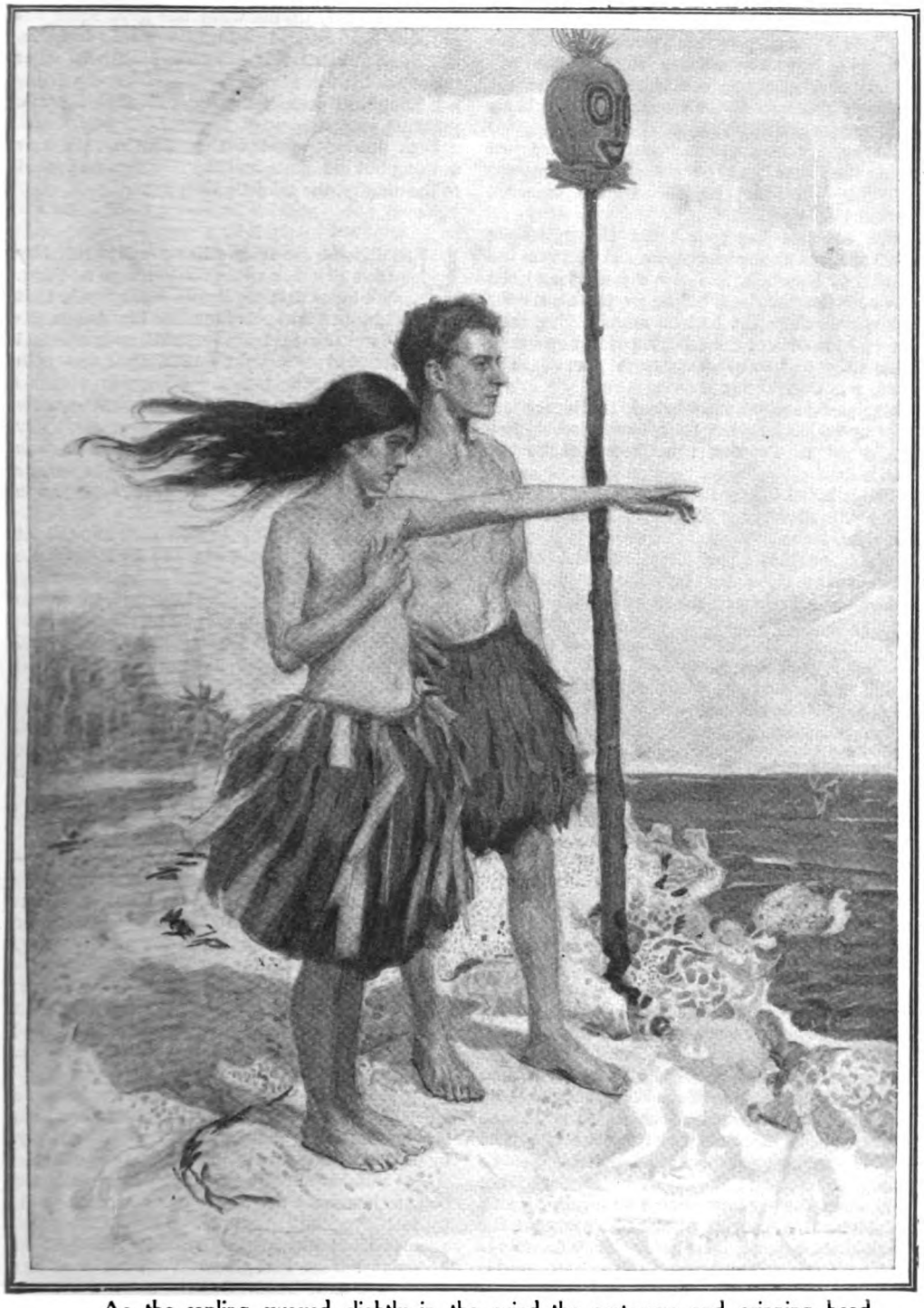
She must have gone into the house to get the knife, but Dick never thought of that; the work she was engaged on held him. She had frayed away the brown husk into a sort of frill and was busy now on the face of it, making eyes in it and the semblance of a nose and mouth.

A NEW idea had come to Katafa, a common-sensical idea, and it was this. Nanawa was the active god of Karolin; frightful, capricious, striking right and left when invoked and sometimes hitting the invoker. She had brought him to her twice, and the first time he had roared over the lagoon and broken her canoe, angry no doubt at having been balked by the god of the little ships; the second time, last night, he was much more satisfactory in his behaviour. But Katafa had a dim suspicion that, had he not found Kearney and taken him to himself, he would have found her; and this suspicion was perfectly well-founded—he would. She determined not to deal with him again.

Now, on Karolin there was another god, Nan. Very old, amiable, the president of the coco nut groves, the puraka patches, and the pandanus trees, a sort of Minister of Agriculture, but much beloved, honoured, and fêted. Nan, in fact, was more than a god, he was the symbol of Karolin, just as the British flag is the symbol of Britain. His old carved-coco nut face was to be found in all the houses, and the sight of it to a Karolinite was as the sight of the Union Jack to an Englishman.

Katafa's idea was to make a symbol of Nan and stick it up on the southern reef; the common-sensical part of the business was the idea of using the deity as a signal. If any fishing canoe from Karolin were to sight that effigy erected on the reef, it would come in to explore, and, if Katafa knew anything of the Karolinites, it would not leave till the whole place had been searched for the persons who had dared to erect the image of the coco nut god on an alien shore. For not only would they consider that the god had been trifled with, which was bad, but that his virtue had been diluted, which was worse. He belonged exclusively to Karolin, and if he went spending his powers on other islands it would be all the worse for Karolin.

Dick watched the girl as she sat working away on a business as bloody and desperate as that of filling a shell with high explosive. Any little trifling thing beyond the routine of daily life would interest Dick, and now, squatting on his heels, the fishing utterly forgotten, he followed every movement of the knife as it worked away at the mouth of the deity, which was anything but an imitation of a rosebud.



As the sapling swayed slightly in the wind the grotesque and grinning head seemed nodding towards Karolin.

"But how will that bring the big fish?" cried Dick.

"They will come from there," said Katafa, pointing south.

"What are you doing that for?" asked he.

"You were saying but yesterday that the fish were growing smaller in the lagoon," replied she, glancing with head aside at the progress of her work, as a woman might glance at a picture she is painting.

"I know," he replied; "but what are you doing that for?"

"This will bring big fish to the lagoon," replied she, darkly.

She saw, as she spoke, not the grotesque ju-ju she was gazing at, but the sun blaze on the waters of Karolin. She saw the wind and the sun and the breakers falling on the coral; for the people there she had no more feeling than she had for Dick or the departed Kearney—they were only to her as shadows or ghosts. The place was everything.

She could see, as she worked, the big canoes landing and taking her back—as for what they might do to Dick, she neither thought nor cared.

"But how?" asked Dick.

"I will show you," said she; "but first get me what I want."

She gave him some directions and off he went to the groves, taking the axe with him, returning in half an hour or so dragging after him an eight-foot sapling, straight as a fishing-rod, four inches thick at the base and tapering gradually to its extremity. She examined the point of the sapling; then, making a hole at the base of the coco-nut, she drove the point in so that the thing was fixed on tight. Then between them they carried the affair to the dinghy, placed it long-ways with the frightful face staring down at the water over the stern, got in, and pushed off.

Dick sculled under her direction, using the oars with a will, and, vastly intrigued with this new game of attracting big fish, he half expected to see them coming after the boat or coming up the lagoon lured by this strange bait. Nothing appeared, however; the dinghy passed the break, reached the southern part of the reef, and tied up.

The wind was fresh this morning, and Katafa, her hair blowing in the wind, stood for a moment looking south, south where Karolin lay.

Then she turned to Dick who was standing beside her supporting Nan. He could not tell yet how the bait was to be used; with the common-sense born in him from his father he was beginning to suspect the whole business as being unpractical; however, he said nothing, and when she began to search about for a crack in the coral or some convenient hole to take the base of the sapling, he helped. They found one some three feet deep, erected the po'e, secured it from rocking with lumps of loose coral and sand, and then stood to look at their work. The thing was hideous, fantastic, and stamped with the seal of the South Seas. The breeze blew the frill on the thing's head, and as the sapling swayed slightly in the wind the grotesque and grinning head seemed nodding towards Karolin.

"Ehu!" cried Dick, "but how will that bring the big fish?"

"They will come from there," said Katafa, pointing south.

Dick looked towards the south. He saw nothing but sea, gulls, and sky. Then he turned to the dinghy, the girl following him.

XV.

UNDER the sea surface lies a world ruled by laws of which we know little or nothing. We know that the shoals have roads that they follow and that some master law keeps the balance so that the ocean's population is checked and restrained to certain limits, that the palu change their feeding ground for some mysterious reason, and that for some other reason equally mysterious the lagoons are poisoned periodically so that the fish become uneatable; but no man knows how or why the poisoner uses his art, or why, as in the instance of Palm Tree, some lagoons are immune.

No one can tell why the fish run small at times, as they had been running in Palm Tree lagoon.

Nan, on the southern reef, grinning out to sea, had done nothing, and as the months passed, sliding away in long ribbons of coloured days, Dick from time to time rubbed the fact in, Katafa saying nothing. She was not expecting bream. She was expecting the long canoes from Karolin, and as the months passed and they did not come, she might have lost heart only that she had something else to think about. Dick.

The relationship between the two had altered subtly.

For a long time—some three months or so—Dick had remembered Kearney, wondering what had become of him, even hunting about the woods spasmodically in the chance of coming on him. Dick knew nothing of death. Kearney had gone, that was all; but where?

This incessant reference to Kearney had stirred something in the girl's mind against Dick, a vague antagonism of the type that had been bred by Kearney, before he hit her on the back with the tia wood ball.

On Karolin she had never felt antagonism or hatred to any one of the human phantoms that surrounded her; it had been reserved for Kearney, by his attempt to hit her with the seaweed stick, and his success in hitting her with the ball, to humanize her to the point of being able to feel aversion and hate. This antagonism against Dick was helped by the fact that he had put her in her place. Without a direct word, yet in a hundred little ways, he made her feel that he was the superior being, or thought himself so.

Keeping still to her shack in the trees, she yet came to meals just as she had done on the

morning after Kearney's disappearance, taking her seat boldly, close to the boy, and showing no trace of the old diffidence and humility; but, unchivalrous as a dog, Dick gave her the worst of the fish and, whilst reserving to himself the high office of cleaning the plates, gave her the rubbish on a leaf to fling into the lagoon. Fishing, out in the boat and on the reef, it was the same. Dick first, Katafa nowhere.

That is perhaps how sex first came between these two, making a foot-mat of the female for the use of his lordship, Dick; sex, a law of nature from the workings of which Katafa was for ever barred out by Taminan. The law which Le Juan had implanted in her subconsciousness, condemning her to eternal isolation, had shown its teeth at Kearney because he had attempted to touch her. Was it showing its teeth at Dick because he was a man?

Katafa only knew that Dick was going the way of Kearney in her mind, turning from an almost abstraction into something she could resent and dislike for some reason that she could not fathom, for he had never made any attempt to touch her.

One day when Dick had taken the dinghy fishing away beyond the cape, he returned elate and triumphant.

"Katafa!" shouted he as he brought the boat up to the bank. "The big fish have come!"

The girl, lying in the shade of the trees by the house, sprang to her feet; the vision of Karolin flashed before her eyes, destroying everything for a moment; then she came running to the bank.

"Where are they?" cried she.

"There,' replied Dick, pointing to the boat, where a brace of big bream lay, red and silver in the sunlight.

It was like a blow between the eyes.

She sat crouched on the bank, watching him with a dark look on her face as he hauled them on shore. Nan had fooled her nicely, yet her animosity was not against Nan but Dick, and next day, when he went off gaily with a single fish spear to the reef, he found that the point had been blunted, the fishing lines began to break without apparent reason, and a lobster hung up one night was gone in the morning.

If he had chewed gum, his gum would have gone into the lagoon after the lobster. It was the same old game she had played with Kearney, and, like Kearney, Dick suspected nothing of what it all meant—or what it portended.

XVI.

THE rainy season came, and made Dick busy mending a hole that had suddenly come in the roof of the house. It passed, leaving the island greener than ever and the birds preparing to mate.

Nan, on his stick on the southern reef, was beginning to show signs of wear and weather; gulls roosting on his crown had left a white patch that did not add to his beauty, and the winds, for ever bending and straightening the sapling, had loosened his head so that it woggled a bit, making at times a click-clocking noise, as though he were clucking his tongue with impatience. But all things have their time and season, and had he been god of the lagoon instead of the coco nut trees and puraka patches, he might have known that the poisonous season had arrived at Karolin.

They had fish ponds there stocked with sea fish to tide them over the bad time, but these pond fish were never quite so good as fresh fish from the sea, and adventurous spirits would put out sometimes long distances after the real article, and, unable to carry fire with them, eat their catches raw.

"A raw sea fish is better than a cooked pond fish," was a proverb with them, and one morning, when Dick took the dinghy round to the eastern beach after bananas, the proverb bore fruit. He had secured his bananas and placed them on the sand ready for shipment when the idea suddenly took him of having a look at the gollywog on the reef. He rowed over, and no sooner had he landed on the coral than away across the sea he saw a canoe. It was longer than the canoe of Katafa; it was standing in towards the reef, and when the occupants caught sight of him a cry came across the water, fierce and sharp, like the rending of calico.

Dick didn't wait. He dropped into the dinghy, rowed off to where an aoa tree jutted over the water just beyond the beach sand, and hid the dinghy under its branches. Then he took to the trees. He had forgotten the bananas. They lay there on the sand shouting to the sun, and it was too late now to secure them, for the canoe was coming into the lagoon. The sail was brailed up and paddles were flashing, and Dick, peeping through the branches, could see the forms and faces of the four rowers—fierce faces, utterly unlike the face of Katafa, and forms brown and polished like mahogany.

The canoe passed the break and took the quiet undulations of the lagoon, the paddles now scarcely touching the water. Gliding and silent as a stoat it came, the faces of the paddlemen turning to right, to left, to left, to right, the eyeballs showing, white as the shark's-teeth necklaces on the breast of the bow paddle.

The bow touched the sand, two of the men jumped out, made for the bananas, turned them over, and gave a shout. The bunches had been cut, no ghost had done that; and assured of this fact, the pow-wow began, the fellows on the beach shouting to the fellows in the canoe, evidently urging them to land.

But the boatmen were coy. Land! Not they! It was well known that this beach was haunted by the spirits of the ancient and the men who had fallen in battle. They were unarmed, they were too few, they would come

at another season with more men to follow them.

"Go, then, and search in the trees thyself, O Sru, son of Laminai!" cried the stern-paddle. "If there is naught to fear, why fear it?"

"Dogs!" cried Sru. He bent, picked up the two banana bunches, and turned to the boats with them.

"They come!" yelled the canoe men.

Dick had burst from the trees, fear flung to the winds at the sight of his precious bananas being spirited away from him. Swift as a panther, flexible as indiarubber, he was almost on Sru when the other man caught him, tripped, fell with him, and lay flattened for a moment with a blow on the nose. Then as Dick bounded to his feet, Sru had him—almost.

Kearney had always clipped Dick's hair, and since the vanishing of Kearney, Dick had done his own clipping when the hair worried him by getting too long, using Lestrange's folding mirror for the purpose. Sru had caught him by the hair, and the hair was just an inch too short for the grip to hold, but long enough to hurt. With a yelp of pain like that of a dog when kicked, Dick struck out and Sru fell.

The lightning-swift blow had been given just below the chin-point. Sru fell like a pole-axed steer, and next moment Dick, a banana stalk in each hand, was running for the trees, trailing the clusters after him and diving amidst the foliage.

HE had saved the bananas, but he was still ready for battle. Rage filled his mind, and a curious musky smell—it was the smell of Sru, coco-nut oil, and Kanaka mixed. The smell kept his anger blazing; game as a terrier who scents a badger, he stuck his head from the leaves, ready to renew the fight, armed only with the weapons of his race; but Sru had not risen. Sru was lying just where he fell. The other man, bending over him and trying to lift him, was chattering and crying to the fellows in the canoe, who had pushed away a bit off the beach, their voices mixing with his like the clanging of seagulls.

"Tia kau—Tia kau—Matadi hai matadi."

The broken sentences came up on the breeze, it was the language of Katafa. What were they saying about the reef and the wind? What was the matter with Sru?

Then Dick saw the bending Kanaka rise, race through the water, and scramble on board the canoe. The paddles flashed and the bow turned towards the break. They were leaving Sru, who still lay on the sand with arms outspread, staring up at the sky.

Now, what was the meaning of that?

Dick knew all about traps, from the trap of the great spider of the woods to the trap which he and Kearney had constructed for catching crawfish on the reef. He was a fisherman and knew the ways of sea creatures that assume the appearance of sleep whilst watchful and waiting to snap; absolutely brave he was, yet no fool, and remained amongst the leaves waiting for developments.

He had no fear of Sru, but great fear of the thing he did not understand. The fellows in the canoe were under the same obsession: they had suddenly come on something they did not understand, and, the foam dashing from their paddles, they drove out, the paddle swirls and the shearing ripple of the outrigger marking their track across the azure-satin surface of the lagoon.

At the break they found their voices, shrill with rage. "Kara! Kara! Kara!" ("War! War! War!") The cry came like the clang of sea-fowl, and they were gone.

Dick watched.

He was standing. He squatted, sitting on his heels, and continued to watch. The bananas were safe, and on that fact he sat contented as on the top of a tower, his eyes travelling from the man on the beach to the opening of the break, and from there to the reef and back again. He was capable of sitting there watching till Sru rotted—almost; capable of anything but playing into the hands of these strange folk, the first enemies he had met, the first robbers.

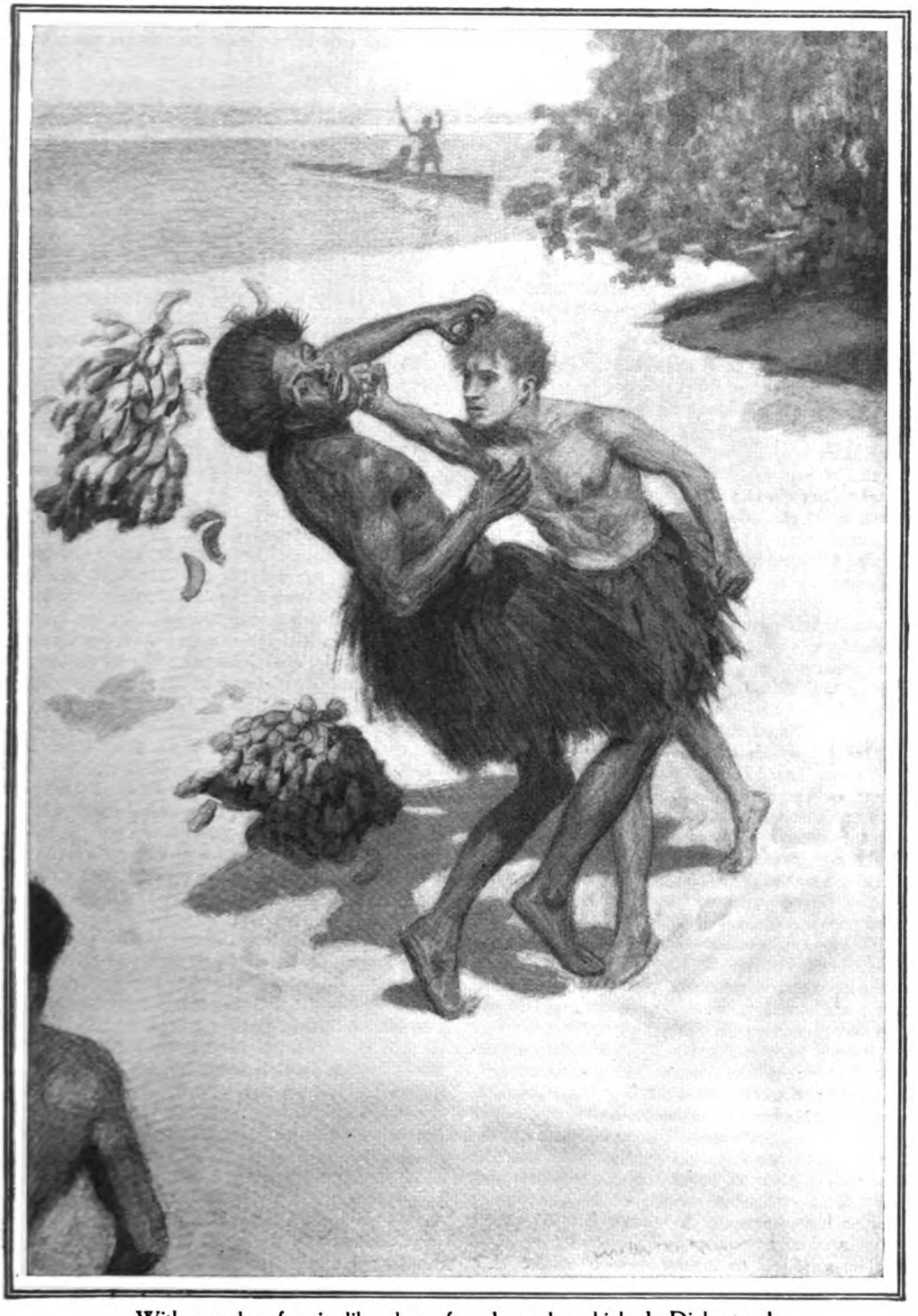
Sometimes the man on the beach seemed to move, but it was only the heat-shaken air blanketing over him; now a cry came from the reef, as though the canoe men had landed there from the outer beach and were threatening him. No, it was only a sea bird.

Then a shadow passed over the sand and a great predatory gull circled over the beach, swept out across the lagoon, returned, and lit on the sand. Sru had fallen near low tide mark, and the great gull after a moment's rest came towards him, hop, hop, hop, across the hard sand, paused, and, as if frightened, took a flight and returned to its original position.

It was not afraid of the man, but it sensed Dick, and was nervous in the face of something it did not understand. Then, gaining courage, it rose and lit on the chest of the man, spreading its wings slightly and steadying itself, and then struck its beak, sharp as a dagger, into the stomach just below the ribs—plong. Like a dropped stone another great gull lit on the man's throat, steadied itself, and struck.

Dick knew now that Sru was out of count like the big fish when they went stiff, and he knew he had knocked him like that just with a blow. He came out, pulling the bananas after him, the birds flew away, and Dick, approaching the body, touched it with his toe. The creature with the broken neck was stiff now as a board, and his slayer stood looking at him, a boy no longer, but a man.

Dick knew nothing about death except its effect upon fish, eels, lobsters, and crabs; some of these fought him like the big eel he



With a yelp of pain like that of a dog when kicked, Dick struck out and Sru fell.

had hooked a month ago in the northward stretch of the lagoon, and which he had killed just as he had killed Sru, the second son of Laminai, that Katafa, without intention and through Fate, had brought to his death.

He touched the body again with his toe, then, seizing his precious bananas, he took them to the dinghy hidden in the branches of the aoa and embarked with them. As he turned the cape he heard the quarrelling of great gulls, sharp and fierce as the voices of the canoe-men. One might almost have fancied it to be their voices rising and falling on the breeze.

"Kara! Kara! Kara!" ("War! War! War!")

XVII.

"KATAFA," said Dick that night as they sat after supper, idle, watching the dark rise over the lagoon, "men came to-day in a boat like yours."

Katafa heaved a great sigh, then she sat as if the breath were stricken out of her, without a word, her eyes fixed on the other. He had said nothing of the affair till now, a fact that spoke volumes as to their mental relationship. Between Dick and Kearney there had been little of what we call conversation; between Dick and Katafa none. The inanimate things around them had the time of their lives, they did the talking or supplied the talk, abstractions had no place in this strange community of two where the actual moment was everything—at least to Dick.

"Men?" said the girl, breaking the silence at last; "where are they?"

"Gone," said Dick. "I struck one, and they went away, all but the one."

Some instinct checked him, helped by dislike of the labour of talking. Dick could think up things from the past easily enough if they were recent, but to arrange them in the order of thought dressed in and connected by words was becoming a hateful labour.

It was extraordinary. The things he saw or touched gave him no trouble, but the things he had seen or touched, even though it were only an hour ago, were bothersome when they had to be turned into talk.

He lay back and yawned, then, rising up, he went down to the lagoon bank and the girl, watching in the dusk, saw him getting into the dinghy. He was baling water out of her. That done, he busied himself for a few minutes overhauling the lines and putting them back in the locker, then he walked off to the house and turned in without a word, just as a cave man might have done in the days before speech was invented.

The girl, left to herself, turned on her side and then on her face, lying with her forehead on her crossed arms, brooding, suffering, dumb. Karolin had drawn close to her and drawn away again, perhaps for ever; but Karolin was only a thought; something deeper than thought had been in its grip, something that had risen in her mind to destroy Dick just as Nanawa had risen from the sea to destroy Kearney.

Once a law becomes part of the human mind, it becomes a living thing capable of good and evil, and the law of Taminan implanted in the mind of Katafa, though simple as the law of gravity, became capable of profound effects, became, in fact, a beast of prey.

Thou shalt not touch another, nor be touched. What law could be simpler than that or more seemingly innocent? Yet of Katafa it had made a creature beyond human sympathy and appeal. It lay in her soul as the barrel-shaped decapod lay in the sea, watchful, ever waiting to strike, ever fearful of being itself destroyed.

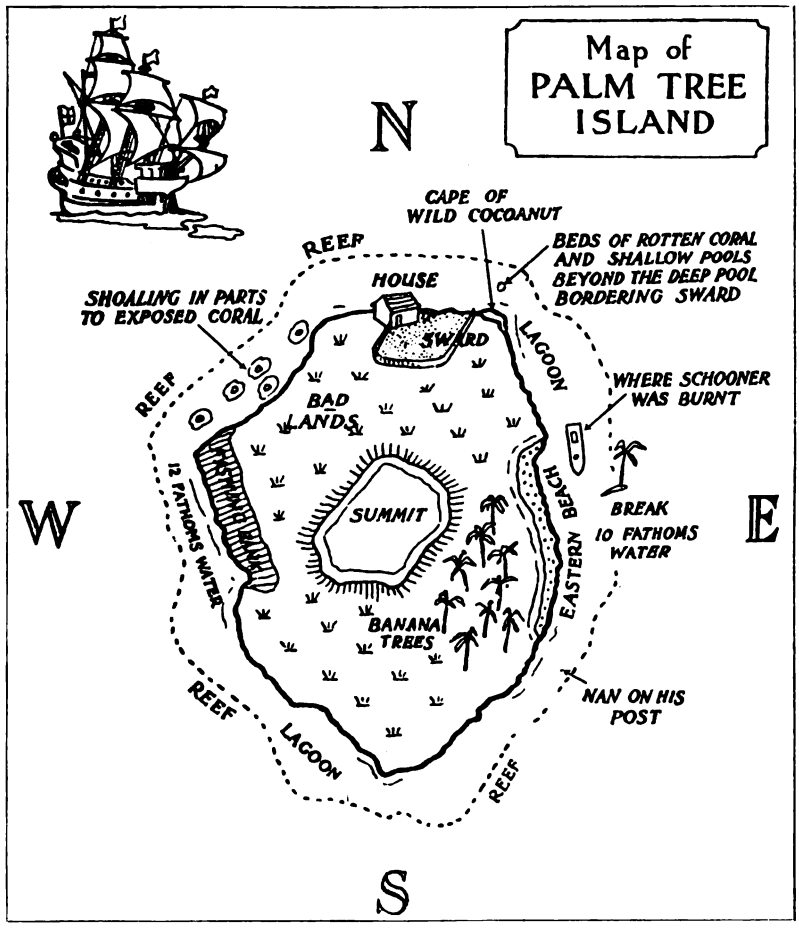
To understand clearly the power of Taminan one must recognize that its hold was not upon conscious thought, but on the sub-conscious basis of thought beyond the power of will and reason, and yet capable of rousing will and reason into action, capable of inspiring the mind with aversion and hatred. It had roused her thinking mind against Kearney, who had threatened it, and now, as she lay with her face on her crossed arms, it was rousing her against Dick, calling on her to destroy him. Why? Dick had never tried to touch her, never threatened her, yet the beast of Le Juan in her soul dreaded Dick even more than it had dreaded Kearney. Up to this, just as in the case of Kearney at first, her conscious mind had set itself against Dick in all sorts of trivial ways, breaking fishing-lines and blunting the spears, but now, as in the case of Kearney when he hit her in the back with the ball, it had something definite to cling to. Dick had sent the canoe back to Karolin.

It was full night now, and as she rose and came down to the lagoon bank the wind from the sea came warm and strong, breezing up the water and bringing with it the sound of the reef and the scent of the outer beach. She cast her eyes on the dinghy where it lay moored to the bank. Dick, inspired by the sapling he had cut for the support of Nan, had made a little mast for the boat; the sail of Katafa's canoe, which had not been destroyed, was lying in the shack behind the house and he intended using it for the purpose of cruising about the lagoon. She looked at the mast and the trivial thought of destroying or hiding it crossed her mind only to be dismissed.

Then, turning from the bank, she drew near the house, and close to the doorway sank down, sitting on her heels, her face towards the doorway, listening. She could hear nothing for a moment but the gently-stirring foliage as it moved to the wind; then, as she listened, clasped in the sound of the softly-moving leaves, she heard the breathing of Dick in his sleep.

The interior of the house was dark except for

a few points of starlight piercing the roof, but as she gazed, her eyes growing accustomed to the darkness, the little ships began to show on their shelves, guarding the dreams of the sleeper beneath. Once, long ago, on the very first night she had passed on the island, the prompting had seized her to set fire to the house, but the ships had saved Kearney and the boy. Now, darkly rising from the recesses of her mind, the prompting came again and the ships were no longer potent against it. She had handled one of them, and though its god had brought Kearney running to its rescue, the god had done nothing else — could not even protect Kearney when Nanawa had seized him on the reef. A futile sort of deity, surely.



She could see the little shelf in the starlight and the matchbox upon it. She rose to her feet without a sound and was moving towards the shelf when a voice struck her motionless. It was the voice of Dick fighting his battle with Sru over again in his dreams.

"Katafa!" came the voice, "hai amanoi Katafa—help! He is seizing me!" Then a mumble of unintelligible words, dying off to silence and the sound of Dick tossing uneasily in his sleep.

She stood with the starlight showering on her and the wind stirring her hair. Something had come between her and the deathly prompting to destroy him; perhaps it was the voice suddenly shattering the silence and her purpose or the appeal for help, the first that had ever reached her from human being. She stood with her head uptilted as a person stands who is trying to catch some far-away sound. Then she drifted away, crossing the sward and vanishing among the trees.

Lying in her shack, she knew that the shark-toothed god had been about to seize Taori with claws of fire—as indeed he had. Taori had called to her for help and she had helped by not firing the thatch. She could not understand in the least why she had held her hand, or why the appeal for help had so shattered her purpose. She didn't try. She only knew that something had balked her for the moment.

(Another long instalment will appear next month.)

PRAY SILENCE FOR THE TOAST-MASTER!

Mr. W. Knightsmith.

An Interview with MR. W. KNIGHTSMITH.

By Fenn Sherie

To all who attend public dinners and important ceremonial functions, Mr. Knightsmith is a familiar figure. With his dignified bearing and his melodious voice, he is the personification of old-world ceremony and courtliness, and is certainly the most famous toast-master in the world. His thirty years' experience of "toasting" has brought him into personal contact with celebrities of every kind, and the following interview reveals some new and interesting side-lights on the characteristics of many well-known personalities.

I ONCE heard an after-dinner speaker say that "toast-masters step in where angels fear to tread."

These were indeed true words spoken in jest, for I cannot imagine any profession which calls for greater discretion, tact, and diplomacy than that of the toast-master at an important social or political function.

In the course of thirty years' experience at banquets and receptions in London and elsewhere I have sometimes been called upon to undertake some very "ticklish" little details. Upon occasions I have had to spirit away uninvited guests—political enemies of eminent politicians who have succeeded in obtaining admission to an "opposition" banquet by some clever ruse; to administer tactful rebukes to gentlemen who have absent mindedly lit a cigar before permission has been given to smoke; and to drop gentle hints to speakers when, carried away by the "exuberance of their own verbosity," they have failed to notice the passing of time. Indeed, more than once I have even been called upon to sit down at the piano and officiate with "musical honours" or the National Anthem because the orchestra happened to be missing at the psychological moment. Such things, however, are all in the day's work, and the toast-master is expected to surmount every difficulty with a smiling face and dignified bearing.

Since my official appointments have brought me in constant contact with celebrities of all kinds—monarchs and movie stars, nobility and notabilities—I have been afforded unique opportunities for the study of greatness in all its varying forms. I have not kept a diary—perhaps that is the better part of valour!—but I am at least in a position to give you my impressions.

As one who has had the honour of serving no fewer than six Kings, and stood behind the chair of the Prince of Wales, the Duke of York, and other members of the Royal Family on many occasions—in fact, as one who has been privileged to speak to almost every celebrity in the land—let me say, first of all, that the outstanding impression I have

gathered is that the truly great are the most human and sympathetic people of all. There is no snobbery among royalties and the nobility; no conceit among the men who have won their way to fame in the realms of art, literature, and drama; no arrogance among famous admirals and generals; no ostentation among the pioneers of exploration and industry. Almost without exception they are dignified but kindly folk, natural in their bearing and utterly unspoiled by fame.

Here is just one example. At the Guildhall some time back I was acting in the capacity of announcer. On the list of guests whose names I had to call out was printed: "Field-Marshal Lord Bemersyde." Knowing this title to be incomplete, I wrote in the nearest blank space the word "Haig," to remind me. Unfortunately, this blank space happened to be against the name of a famous Naval man—with the awful result that, when the time came, I called out in my best "official" tone: "Admiral of the Fleet Lord Haig!"

It is impossible to describe my feelings. Prominent men who stood near me stared with amazement, and Lord Haig himself looked as though he were struggling between laughter and annoyance. Of course, I made an immediate apology and corrected the mistake.

Recently I officiated at a function at which Earl Haig was again present, and I took the opportunity of making a personal apology to him. He smiled pleasantly, shook me by the hand, and thanked me for the honour I had bestowed upon him by promoting him to the senior service!

On another occasion I was announcing the guests at a cotillon party at Old Windsor when Prince Adolphus of Teck entered with a lady. Jumping at conclusions, I announced "The Prince and Princess of Teck," but it so happened that H.R.H. the Princess was indisposed—and I felt very small when I glanced up from the list of names from which I was reading and saw the face of the lady who stood before me. However, I am glad to say that everybody took the matter as a joke, and made mock curtsies to the "bogus Princess."

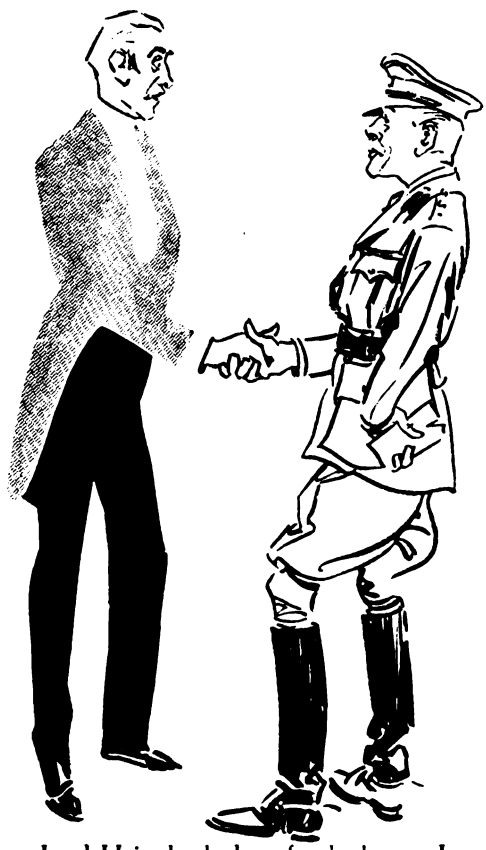
Another instance of making a wrong announcement occurred at the Royal Automobile Club. Two of the principal guests were F.M. the Rt. Hon. Lord Roberts and the Rt. Hon. Lord Charles Beresford. After announcing the Field-Marshal I astonished the assembly (and myself also) by announcing "The Rt. Hon. Lord Charles Roberts." The Field-Marshal quickly stepped forward to the Admiral, and holding out his hand said: "Pleased to meet you, brother Charles!"

I am afraid I was the only one who did not enjoy the joke.

Lord Burnham is very fond of telling a story of the days when he was the Honourable Sir Harry Lawson. It appears that a certain toast-master announced him as "The Honourable Sir Harry Lauder." Unfortunately, whenever his lordship tells this story at a public dinner, his hearers almost invariably jump to the conclusion that I was responsible for the blunder. So now, as soon as I hear Lord Burnham leading up to this anecdote, I make a point of whispering in his ear, and he graciously informs the company that "It was not our friend here, Knightsmith."

I have already referred to the matter of uninvited guests, and I call to mind several disconcerting incidents in the days when women were fighting for the vote.

At one dinner, given in connection with the private journal circulated from St. Martin's-le-Grand, a suffragette appeared as if by magic and commenced



Lord Haig thanked me for the honour I had bestowed upon him by promoting him to the senior service.

to address a lengthy harangue to the Post-master-General, who was in the chair. I immediately asked her to withdraw, but she flatly refused, so there was no alternative but to use force. Assisted by the head waiter, I seized her by the arms and tried to drag her towards the door, but she entwined her fingers in the tablecloth and brought glasses and cutlery tumbling about in all directions. Eventually we managed to force her to relax her grip and succeeded in hustling her out of the room.

Shortly afterwards I was officiating at a dinner given at the Hotel Cecil to General Botha (who, by the way, although able to converse in quite good English, often prefers to make his public speeches in Dutch and to have each sentence interpreted). Here another suffragist—a man this time—made himself unpleasant, but I managed to eject him unceremoniously before he did any damage. No sooner had he gone than another man rose to his feet at the opposite end of the room and commenced to address the company on the question of women's suffrage—and he, too, made an undignified exit. By this time I was in a state of nervous tension, and, in my imagination, I could see suffragists jumping up all round the room. Sure enough, as soon as General Botha began to speak, yet another man sprang to his feet and addressed the assembly. I was behind him in an instant, and before he had spoken half-a-dozen words I had placed my hand firmly on his shoulder, saying: "Now, sir! Now, sir!" There was a moment's pause—and then came a terrific roar of laughter from about six hundred people. The gentleman whom I had so abruptly silenced was the interpreter!

Before he had spoken half-a-dozen words I had placed my hand firmly on his shoulder, saying: "Now, sir! Now, sir!"

I instantly apologized to the entire company, and although I felt exceedingly uncomfortable, the General and the interpreter soon put me at my ease with a smile and a handshake. Mr. Lloyd George, who was in the chair, turned to me and said: "You have given me the best laugh I've had for months, toast-master." The merry twinkle in his eye proved that he forgave me also.

One of the most important details to be observed by an announcer is the correct pronunciation of names. For example, Lord Riddell's name is one which is often mispronounced (it should be spoken as though it were spelt Riddle), and the name of Dean Inge is often announced as it is spelt—*i.e.*, to rhyme with "singe"—whereas, to be correct, it should rhyme with "sing."

Many people have been handed down some singularly unfortunate names, and in these instances I have sometimes noticed that, whilst a man will expect his name to be pronounced as spelt, his wife may insist upon giving it some new twist to make it more "stylish." More than once I have had to pause for a while, pending the termination of a little domestic wrangle as to whether such names as "Sidebottom" should be announced as "Siddibeautham," or "Pottie" as "Pouté."

The correct pronunciation of Lord Dalziel, as another example, should be "Lord De-il," but when, as is my custom, I asked his lordship if he preferred it to be thus pronounced, he objected on the ground that it sounded "too much like a Scotsman's name for Old Nick."

Naturally the question of correct pronunciation of difficult names calls for a great deal of tact on the part of the toast-master, for on many occasions, after a well-known personage has proposed a toast using the incorrect pronunciation, I have often felt very diffident about using the correct one when repeating the toast after him, for fear that he should think me presumptuous in "putting him right." That is yet another example of my having to step in where "angels fear to tread."

I have always been extremely interested in observing the mannerisms of speakers, and have made a point of studying their various requirements. There are some, for example, who do not seem to be happy unless they are able to manufacture little pellets from bread-crumbs whilst they are speaking. Others

Mr. Lloyd George turned to me and said: "You have given me the best laugh I've had for months, toast-master."

prefer to fidget with glasses and cutlery, moving them backwards and forwards as though they are playing a game of chess. It is remarkable how some speakers actually seem to get inspirations from such movements, and seem quite disconcerted if they are not able to toy with something on the table.

On the other hand, the Rt. Hon. W. M. Hughes, K.C., the Prime Minister of Australia, invariably sweeps away everything within reach before he commences to speak. Probably this habit of "clearing decks for action" gives him a sense of freedom.

Another man who requires freedom is Lord Balfour. Although he does not interfere with the things on the table, he invariably moves backwards and forwards whilst he is speaking, gradually edging his chair away until it is sometimes three or four feet from the table. When Lord Balfour begins to move his chair in this manner, I generally draw it back out of his way. Many people, unaware of his peculiarity, have tried to prevent me from doing this for fear that he might sit down suddenly, but I know from experience exactly when he is about to resume his seat, and am always ready at the precise moment. Lord Balfour uses his hands very expressively when he requires to emphasize a passage in his speech, and often throws his arms outwards with considerable violence. There are many well-known speakers who do this, and I have noticed that men sitting on either side of them have instinctively ducked their heads lest the orator should strike them.

Mr. Lloyd George is, of course, a wonderful speaker, though I have not noticed anything unusual in his mode of delivery—unless it be the little mannerism of repeating the last few words of a sentence upon which he may wish to lay a particular stress. Mr. Winston Churchill, strangely enough, does exactly the same thing when conversing.

The American Ambassador, Mr. Harvey, drinks an enormous quantity of mineral water in the course of a speech, refreshing himself every minute or two and sometimes raising his drink to his lips so rapidly that the final word of a sentence is actually spoken into his glass. In America, by the way, the chairman is called the "toast-master," and audiences in this country have often been surprised to hear an American gentleman commence a speech with some such words as "With the permission of the toast-master——"

I have been asked to name the finest orator I have ever heard. That is very difficult, but I consider Lord Burnham to be the most apt speaker of all, out of the Cabinet, for he seems to be able to talk interestingly upon almost any subject under the sun. Another speaker who interests me greatly is Lord Birkenhead—formerly known as F. E. Smith—who listens to other people's speeches

Mr. W. M. Hughes, the Prime Minister of Australia, invariably sweeps away everything within reach before he commences to speak.

without moving a muscle, and, when speaking himself, is one of the wittiest orators one could wish to hear.

H.R.H. the Duke of York speaks in a very deliberate and thoughtful manner, and there is a pronounced sincerity in all his utterances, while H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, though so youthful in appearance, speaks with the phrasing and manner of an experienced orator.

Have I ever taken advantage of the opportunities offered for collecting autographs and souvenirs of royalties and various celebrities?

I am usually far too busy to be able to find time to ask for their autographs, but I have sometimes found little articles of jewellery and so on which have been dropped, and which I would dearly like to have kept as souvenirs. Needless to say, I have always made it a duty to see that they have been returned to their rightful owners—indeed, I am proud to have been the means of making countless people happy by the return of lost property. Only once have I been tempted to break this rule and that was on the occasion of a lunch at Aberdeen. Queen Alexandra took some pins from her veil at the commencement of the lunch and laid them down on the table. I made up my mind that if Her Majesty left those veil-pins behind I would take them home to my wife as a souvenir, and I watched them very carefully. Alas for my covetousness, Queen Alexandra put them back again when she readjusted her veil.

It was upon this occasion that I heard the late King Edward make an interesting remark. Pointing out a venerable and dignified figure who was seated at the opposite end of the table, His Majesty said to Queen Alexandra: "That is Lord Strathcona, known as the 'Grand Old Man.' He thinks no more of taking a trip to Canada than the average man does of riding on the Metropolitan Railway."

I am the proud possessor of many handsome presents from various personalities, and among them I particularly treasure an inkstand presented to me by the late Sir Ernest Shackleton, and a gold card-case, inlaid with an ivory horse, from the late Mr. Vanderbilt, the famous coaching millionaire, who gave up his life-belt to a woman on board the ill-fated *Lusitania*.

I also have a certificate from Lord Desborough in appreciation of "services rendered" at the "White City," Shepherd's Bush, many years ago.

I acted in the capacity of megaphone man at the Stadium during the Olympic Games, and I believe I was the first man ever professionally employed as a megaphonist. Those who remember the finish of the famous International Marathon will recall that Dorando, the winner, fell from exhaustion when near the winning-post, and was helped to his feet. The question arose as to whether he should be disqualified on these grounds, and whilst the somewhat heated arguments were proceeding I had rather an uncomfortable time, as I was accused of helping him up. As a matter of fact it was another man, carrying a megaphone, who had lifted him to his feet (though I will add that I would have done the same had I been nearest to him), but even to this day I am often accosted as "the man who helped up Dorando."

That was an interesting diversion from my accustomed work at social gatherings, and I enjoyed it immensely.

People have often asked me whence the custom of "toasting" originated. It is very uncertain, although it probably developed into a formal practice in the seventeenth century. In the days of Beau Nash and other gallants a pretty woman was spoken of as a "toast," so that, apparently, "The Ladies" is the oldest toast of all. Quite when the official position of toast-master was inaugurated I cannot say, but I have an old print depicting a Lord Mayor's banquet at the Guildhall in the Georgian period, and in this the figure of the toast-master is prominent.

Until comparatively recently the profession of toast-master was unknown—indeed, to this day I believe I am the

Another man who requires freedom is Lord Balfour. When he is speaking I generally draw his chair back out of his way.

only professional toast-master whose living depends upon this kind of ceremonial work—and in the past the functions were generally undertaken by a City or Government official, or head waiter. It was customary with some City companies after each banquet for the toast-master to be taken to the wine-cellar and presented with a bottle of wine—probably with the idea of persuading him to refrain from imbibing whilst "at his post."

By the way, I made this facetious remark to a newspaper reporter some little while back, and was reported as having said that in the old days waiters who acted as toast-masters were usually drunk before the evening was ended! Needless to say, this made things a little unpleasant for me among a class of men whose close co-operation is essential to the success of my arrangements, and I was put to considerable trouble to explain it away. As a matter of fact I have hardly ever known a waiter to drink whilst on duty, and it is a matter for regret, to me, that waiters are so often maligned.

The American Ambassador drinks an enormous quantity of mineral water in the course of a speech.

Which reminds me of an unpleasant incident that occurred at an important wedding reception in the West-end recently. Among other presents, the bride had a beautiful pair of Indian filigree gold earrings given her during the reception, which, for some reason, she placed on a chair beneath her bouquet. In the course of cutting the cake it was suddenly discovered that the earrings were missing. The manager of the restaurant 'phoned to Scotland Yard; and a detective was sent immediately. The guests left the room, and the waiters were asked if they were willing to be searched. I immediately made a protest against the suggestion that only the waiters might be implicated, and asked that I, as well as the orchestra and other members of the staff in the room, should be searched also. My suggestion was disregarded, and only the waiters were searched—I am glad to say, for their sakes, without success. It was regrettable that the earrings did not come to light, but it affords proof of my contention that waiters are not always so bad as they are painted.

Another little duty in which I am partly concerned at many important dinners is the taking of flashlight photographs. Few people realize the number of minor details which must be considered in this connection if a successful result is to be obtained with the minimum of discomfort to the guests. The choice of position of the camera having been made by the photographer, the toast-master has to see to the removal of certain plants and table numbers which obstruct the view, to see that windows are opened to hasten the clearance of the smoke after the flash, to arrange for the temporary withdrawal of the waiters, and then to choose the most suitable moment for the taking of the picture. Many celebrities dislike being photographed at any time — although the photographer of to-day is much more considerate than of yore—and I know a number of well-known personages who have an absolute hatred of the flashlight.

At one dinner I remember Princess Alice of Athlone was not at all eager to be photographed, but the Prince of Wales, with his usual cheery manner, said: "It's no use, Alice, we've got to go through it." The remark brought a smile to the face of the Princess, and the photograph was taken without further demur.

The shyness of the Prince of Wales once impressed me very much. Some years ago, when ushering the Royal party into a box at the Crystal Palace on the occasion of the opening of the Festival of the Empire, I stepped aside and stood behind a curtain so that their Majesties the King and Queen might be seen to full advantage, when, to my surprise, the King turned in my direction and quietly called: "Eddie! Eddie!"

It was then that I discovered that somebody else was standing behind me, also hiding himself from the public gaze. It was H.R.H. the Prince of Wales!

IN THE DARK

By

E. NESBIT.

ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN CAMPBELL.

IT was one of those war-engagements entered on in haste, between two people each keyed up to something so different from the normal self as to be really a perfectly different entity. Or perhaps the psycho-analysts would tell us that the personality which emerged during the stress of war was really only the sub-conscious self, purified by pity and terror. Only you know it wasn't. It was the real self, but with all the lights heightened, the shadows deepened—the real man or woman painted with flaming colours and a coarse brush, or perhaps rather the real man or woman conventionalized to a sort of typical blowsy loud definiteness—like cheap oleographs of great pictures. What did she see in him? A soldier, first of all. That was what every woman saw in every man who wore the ugly sand-coloured cloth that served for the British uniform. Next—an officer. Then, a gentleman her social superior; one whose voice was kind, whose hands were gentle, and who admired her—yes—but seriously? A fount of honour and worship and flowers and chocolates and theatres and rides in taxis—a feather in her cap, a captive of her bow and spear—someone to talk about, to boast about, to exhibit the photographs and the letters of, to be anxious about—when she remembered—to be proud of when he was mentioned in despatches, to write to—but that was a nuisance—to be married to some day.

That the young man's means were such as to ensure that their married life would begin in nothing less than a nice villa—possibly even detached—with a "girl," or perhaps even two, and no silly worry about money—really, to do Bessie justice, counted for very little. But it did count for something.

And he? What he saw in her was first and last and all the time woman, girl, soft pink cheeks, radiant brown hair—bright eyes that sparkled for him, red lips that smiled for him, a dazzling enchantment, an embodied dream, intoxicating in its life and colour to the young man newly come from the blood and mud of the trenches, the drab horror of No Man's Land.

He stepped off the gangway at Folkestone worn out with the interminable dot-and-go-one of the leave-train, the rolling and tumbling and pitching of the cross-Channel journey. The dawn was rising in cold silver over the sea when he shivered into the hotel and asked for coffee. And it was brought by a vision radiant as the dawn itself, but warm and kind, with cheering words and pleasant smiles. He found himself watching her as she waited on the cold, tired men, and pleased himself with the thought that she did not smile quite so kindly on them as she had done on him.

He was right.

When the others had gone their ways and he still sat there, too tired to move, she came and talked to him.

"If I was you, I shouldn't go on, not to-day," she advised. "You get a room here and have a day's sleep—that's what you want. Send a wire home to say you can't get there before to-morrow. They'll be disappointed, but anything's better than going home with that face on you."

"I'm not going home," he said. "My people are in New Zealand."

"Where are you going to spend your leave, then?"

"I don't know—anywhere—London—I don't know."

"Well, you go to bed, that's what you do, or you won't get any benefit from your leave."

"I'd take your advice," he said, "if I wasn't too tired to move."

She put her hands in his—soft, warm, kind hands. "Heave-ho!" she said, laughing, and pulled him to his feet.

"That's the way to the bureau," she said; "can you get there all right?"

"Oh, I'm not so tired as all that," he told her; "but I say—when shall I see you again?"

"I'm always here; five to five," she said.

"But after five?"

"Oh, then I go home to my friends."

"I say—come somewhere in the town and have tea—at five—I don't know a creature here. Do—there's a kind little girl; it'll be a charity."

"Not really?" she said. "All right, just for once. But I don't make a habit of it."

"I shall find you here at five?"

"If I was you, I shouldn't go on, not to-day," she advised. "You get a room here and have a day's sleep—that's what you want."

HE did find her there at five, but not alone—a pale-faced young lady was talking to her—a lady so very different from Bess that a cold shock of surprise went through him as he found himself being introduced to "My cousin Eliza—Miss Dixon." "I told her about you asking us to tea, and she's quite willing."

"How do you do?" said Cousin Eliza, and her voice was soft like Bessie's, and said no more.

He talked all the time, Bessie part of the time, Cousin Eliza not at all. She was the

merest gooseberry. A dreamy, absent companion, buried in her own thoughts—but an inevitable one, too, the young man found.

For he stayed in Folkestone, and every day he and the bright flushed Bessie and the pale cousin met and had tea and walked on the Leas, or to Cæsar's Camp, or along the road past the pebbly waste.

If it had not been for the constant chaperonage of the cousin, his fancy might have spent itself in pretty speeches, chocolates, flowers, and perhaps a kiss or two. And so, back to the trenches a free man still. But the presence of the chaperon made every stolen glance, every fleeting touch of hand on shoulder, a thrilling, priceless secret.

One night, as the three walked home through the dark street, hands found each other and clung fast. Next evening the friendly darkness allowed him to pass his arm round a soft, yielding figure. Her head leaned lightly towards him, rested a moment on his shoulder. But on his other side was the pale, silent cousin. He stooped to Bess, and whispered in her ear: "I must see you alone. To-morrow? When? Where? I'm going back the day after!"

Her hand touched his that lay against her warm shape. Four strong definite pats.

He was at her table at four o'clock on the next day. And the chaperon was not there. And Bessie was in hat and coat and gloves.

"I've got leave," said Bessie.

They left the hotel, not together, but furtively, like guilty conspirators, found a taxi, and were driven out into the country. As soon as the door was shut on them he took her hands—when the town died away to fields and woods he took her in his arms.

"How could you?" he asked, after many kisses. "This is the first time I've ever been alone with you. Your cousin——"

"She promised mother to look after me—it's rather a bore—but she's very kind really. I suppose I may tell her?"

"Tell her what?"

"Oh, about our being engaged."

"Yes—tell her by all means," he said, after a hesitation that lasted less than a second. "Let's go back and tell her now, and buy a ring before the shops shut."

"How lovely!" said Bessie.

THE cousin was waiting at Bessie's table in the restaurant. It was not yet five, though so much had happened. They told her. She wished them joy very kindly and simply; a faint colour shone in her cheeks, a smile softened her mouth. For the first time he perceived that the cousin also had beauty.

The last few crowded hours passed dreamlike. Then came farewells and the parting. And all through the short drama the sound of the guns over there had never ceased; he and she had heard it all the time. To its terrible music Bessie went back to her work in floods of tears. And she was quite pale and interesting-looking. Her friends sympathized very much.

He, when the boat was out of sight of England, drew a long breath, as one awakened from a dream. He was caught back into a life that had nothing to do with that isolated, agitated episode at Folkestone. But he thought of Bessie with wonderful tenderness. He could still feel the touch of her soft lips, the pressure of her kind hands. And he had her photograph. And, presently, her letters.

He was deeply determined, at the very back of his mind, to make every allowance for her letters. Of course, they could not be expected to be literary. She was a wild flower, a lovely wild flower. Her mind was quite unformed, and he was going to form it.

He had not much time to speculate about her letters, for the first one reached him, as by some miracle, almost at once.

And this, the first of many letters, gave him to think:—

"Dear,—I wish I were this letter. Because then I could travel with you on the 'Daisy,' and find you quite soon after you get over there, and tell you all the things you wanted me to say to you when we were together. But I ought not to envy the letter, because I shall be where you are—at least, all my heart will be—and that's the really important thing, isn't it? But the rest of me will have to see you go to-morrow, and look at the sea every day till the day when you come back to your faithful friend and love."

He did not find it necessary to make any excuses to himself for this letter. Nor did he find any difficulty about answering it. He was also able to say to that curious unsatisfied critic at the back of his mind:—

"There! What did I tell you? You see, it is all right. And look at her handwriting—how neat and pretty. And the one rose-leaf pressed in the letter—from the roses I gave her that morning. It's right, it's all right, it's better than right."

So he turned again to the business of war. And her letters came, and the parcels came—such as women used to ease their hearts by sending across the sea—and his letters to her and hers to him wove a strong web that seemed to hold her and him together.

"*I would not have believed,*" he wrote to her, "*that letters could do so much. It*

is as though I heard you talking—and yet you never would talk much about real things. But our time together was so short, wasn't it? And you hadn't had time to get used to me. I almost thought you were afraid to talk to me—real talk, I mean. And I was afraid, too—you won't think that silly; men are afraid of saying the wrong thing just as much as girls are—more, I think. But we're not afraid of each other now, are we? And if our time together was short then, it's to be long, long, long when the war's over—a whole, long, happy life together, my dear wild-rose-face—my darling sweetheart."

IT was quite a thick packet of letters that they found with a photograph in his pocket when he was wounded. And as soon as his arm was in splints—it was only his arm—and he was conscious again, he said "Letters," and they let him have them under his pillow.

And then the hospital was shelled, and when things were quiet again his arm was mending, but he was blind. The doctors could find no injury and no disease. Only, he could not see. And the doctors gave no hope. They were each doing three men's work and were rather short in their answers, but quite plain.

So he got a nurse to write for him to Bessie—to tell her that now he was blind he felt that marriage was not for him, and that he hoped she would soon forget him—all the things, you know, that you could get a nurse to write for you.

And she answered, in the kind of letter that you would not mind having read aloud by a nurse.

"*What nonsense!*" the letter ran. "*As if I were going to give up my life's happiness for any such reason as that. To begin with, I believe your dear eyes will be all right again quite soon. And if they aren't, why, you'll want someone to read and write letters for you till they are all right. And that someone is going to be ME. So get your kind nurse to write and tell me that you would like me to put up the banns.*"

With more to the same tune.

But at the bottom of the page she wrote very large and plain, "*To the Nurse. Private. Make him see that I can't give him up. I love him more than life. It's for my own sake, not his, that I want to marry him. Make him see that.*"

The nurse, as it happened, was a person capable of seeing such things and of causing them to be seen.

He was discharged sooner than he expected. There were no banns. The three weeks' delay was undesirable. A special licence would enable them to catch an early ship to New Zealand.

Bessie did not meet him at his landing—she was bidding farewell to her friends in Somerset.

They were to be married at All Saints', and at the appointed hour, or rather before it, he was there with a brother officer—his mind a tangle of remorse and regret and longing and hope and despair. He drove through the dark streets, walked up the dark churchyard, and stood in the black darkness in a cold, windy place which he understood to be the chancel of the church. A hand came out of the darkness and shook his. It was the parson's.

"I wish you every happiness," said the parson—and went on to something affable about affliction being all for our good.

He stood in the black dark and heard. Then the waiting began. When they had waited nearly an hour the parson went away to his dinner.

"If the lady arrives you can send for me," he said, not at all hopefully.

The friend would have had the bridegroom sit down, but he would not.

"It would not be respectful to her," he said.

Very pale and lean, with drawn face and wide-open, fixed grey eyes, he stood there, waiting, waiting, waiting.

The friend at last ventured to suggest that there must have been some misunderstanding as to time and place.

"No," said the bridegroom, "she will come."

And at a quarter to three, when the clergyman had come back to see whether there really was to be any wedding, there was a sound of wheels—and a sound of hurrying feet. He heard them in that black darkness.

"Ah, here she is!" said the friend, relieved. He wanted to get away to his own sweetheart.

"Ah, here she is!" said the parson. "No delays if you wish to be married to-day. There is only just time. The bride on the left, if you please—yes."

So the bride, very pale and tremulously offering explanations, was brushed and hustled into place and the service hurried through—and Elizabeth Somers signed her maiden name for the last time in her life—and the clergyman shook hands and took his fee—and the friend shook hands and took his leave, and the bride led the bridegroom to the waiting car and they took their way to the station. He could feel that she was trembling all over.

"Dearest," he said in the car, as it hooted and bustled its way to the station, "my dearest—you're sure you aren't sorry?

You don't regret—— Selfish beast that I am to let you."

"It's not that," she said, very low. "I don't want to talk. Let me rest, won't you, and just hold your hand and be glad. I *was* in time. Forgive me for making you wait."

So they held hands all the way to London, though there were people in the carriage, and together were glad and sad at once, as lovers in such case may well be.

THEY had food at the London terminus ("Yes—I'm eating all right—but I can't talk," she said), and then they were alone in the train and the train was moving. She was being whirled through a maze of mean streets that mocked the sunshine, opposite a man with pale set face, and eyes that did not see you—did not any more see anything. He was, as now for ever he knew he must be, in black darkness: the darkness at present was shaken and jarred, and in the darkness there was a voice that answered when he spoke. Just answered, very briefly, and then was silent. He felt a little hurt, a little injured, so he too was silent. And the train shivered and vibrated on its way.

Between his speech and her answers there was that in the silence which struck him suddenly.

"Is anything wrong?" he asked. "Why were you late?"

"I couldn't help it," she said, in a voice so heartbroken that he reached out his arms to her.

"Where are you?" he said. "I can't come to you, you know. I don't know where you are."

She came to him on that, and he took her in his arms.

"You've something to tell me," he said, with absolute certainty—"something terrible."

"Not really terrible—it can all be put right," she said. "I'll tell you directly. Let me stay like this for a minute first." Her hand crept round his neck and her face lay against his.

"What can anything matter," he said, "since we are here together?" And so for a little time he sat there holding her in profound peace and contentment.

Then she put him from her and spoke.

"What would you have done if I hadn't come?"

"But I knew you *would* come," he said, and sought to hold her again embraced.

"What shall I do?" she said again. "What shall I do? I thought I could go through with it and tell you when you had learned to love me. You would have learned to love me. But I can't, I can't. I must tell you. I must, I must. There must be truth between us if there's nothing else."

"What is it?" he urged, in an agony. "Tell me. Is it that—that you don't love me, that there's someone else?"

"No, no, no, no, no," she said. "I do love you—that's my only excuse. At least, it doesn't excuse, but it explains."

"Explains *what?* Bess, if you don't tell me I shall go mad. I can't see you. I can't see you—I can't tell what you mean. You must say everything—I can never read anything in your face. Tell me, tell me, what is it?"

"Let me hold your hand," she said, and held it. "Now! I'm not Bessie. I'm Eliza. Bessie wouldn't marry you because of—because—she said she would, she swore she would, and then she cried off at the last minute and sent me to tell you so."

"But why didn't you tell me?"

"I *couldn't*. With those people there wondering and pitying? I couldn't shame you before them—have them say *you* were left in the lurch. I did try—and while I was trying to do it they hustled me up beside you and began the service. And I thought you'd never know till I told you. And you never would have known, if I hadn't told you. And I love you far, far more than she did. And you can get us unmarried if you like. Or—you can forgive me, and let me try to teach you to love me."

"Love you?" he cried, flinging her hands away. "You, who make a mock of a blind man and trick him into marrying you? And then talk of love—why, I don't even know that my Bessie has given me up. It may be all a lie of yours. I must find out."

He stood up and groped for the communication cord.

"No, no," she said. "You can't do anything now. Don't be unhappy—we'll get it all put right. Only not Bessie, because she's gone off with somebody else."

It was then that he sat down and covered his face with his hands. And she watched the sunlit fields speed by, then the sunlight was shut off by a deep cutting, and the train ran screaming into a tunnel.

IT was almost at once that the shock came, a shock of unbelievable violence that threw each of them against the side of the carriage. The lamps were extinguished and a red light flamed at the windows; there was a rattle and roar. Cries and shouts, then raging spluttering of an engine. Screams. Then a rattling on the roof of the carriage like the rattling of earth on a coffin-lid. Then deep darkness, and something that was almost silence.

Then came her voice.

"Are you hurt?" she said.

"No—are you?"

"No."

"Can you see what's happened?"

"No; it's quite dark. The lamp's gone out."

"Put your head out of the window."

"I can't," she said, after a pause. "There's something up against it—it feels like earth, and there's earth on the floor of the carriage. Yes—I'll try the other window."

She felt her way past him, and felt him draw back.

"The other window won't open," she said. "Oh, what is it?"

The bride led the bridegroom to the waiting car. He could feel that she was trembling all over.

"There's been an accident, of course," he said, crossly. "Oh, if I could only see!"

"It wouldn't make any difference," she said, gently. "I can't see either. There's nothing *to* see. It's all black."

"Yes," he said, "it's all black."

"Oh," she broke out, "how do you bear it? It's *always* like this to you—you're very, very brave. I feel as if I were going mad. Oh, mayn't I come and hold your hand? We're buried alive and I'm not going to behave like a coward or a fool—but it would be easier to behave properly if I weren't all alone over here."

Then he came across to her and held her in his arms, coldly, as one holds a frightened child whom one does not love. And she clung to him and said:—

"I do love you—I do. You don't believe now that I was deceiving you? It was always I who loved you. *She* didn't. She doesn't know what love means. And you never loved her. It's *me* you've been loving all these months."

"Hush, hush!" he murmured.

"No—I'm not mad. If we're going to die here together you shall know. She never cared. She couldn't even be bothered to write to you. *I* wrote all those letters. All the letters you wrote were written to me, to me, to me. Oh, won't you forgive me, in case we're going to die?"

"We won't die," he said, and his voice was changed. "Those letters? It was you who wrote them? But the letters——"

"They do count for something, don't they?" she urged. "They were half of it, weren't they? Didn't the letters count for as much as—as what Bessie gave you? Don't the letters count at all, then?"

"But they do," he said; "the letters are almost all—at least—— Oh, I don't know—it's all like a mad dream, but don't let us lose our heads. Let's hold on to each other. After all, neither of us is alone." And he held her more closely, for indeed the clasp of her hand round his neck had a magic of its own that reinforced the magic of her soft voice—so like Bessie's, so very like, and yet with a note in it that he had longed for in Bessie's voice and had never heard. Bessie, and her kisses—the fleet, brief hours. The letters—the long, slow weeks and months.

"Thank you for caring like this," he said, found her hand, and kissed it.

"To be alone in the dark," she said, pulling her hand away to hold on to him with it. "Oh, try to forgive me. If I hadn't done what I did you'd be all alone here now, and I should be—— You see I was right. I must have had a premonition. If this is really the end—you can forgive me, can't you? Remember *I am the letters*. It's me you wrote yours to."

"Rest so," he said; "if we are saved we can talk of all these things. If this is the end—I've dragged you into it. And we are together, and any talk of forgiveness is childish."

But she would not have that. And so they talked, and presently she led him to tell her all that she had longed to hear—of his people, his youth, his childhood.

AND the time wore on and he said at last: "There is air coming in or we should be dead by now. Can't you see any light?"

But she could not.

Then he must hear her life-story—of scholarships and college, and a dying woman commending her cousin Bessie to her care—of chaperonage—of anxieties.

"And then *you* came," she said, "and I knew she did not care—and—but I've told you all that. Listen! Can you hear anything—anything different?"

They held their breath and listened. And it was the sound of picks and shovels they heard.

"We aren't going to die," he said. "My brave lady of the letters, we're going to have life to learn to know each other in."

"You're going to forgive me?" she said low in his ear. For indeed all this time they were very close together.

"I'm going to adore you," he said; "it *is* you I love—you who showed me your heart in your letters—you who—— Oh, bravest girl in the world—but what a life for you, to be the star of a blind man's night."

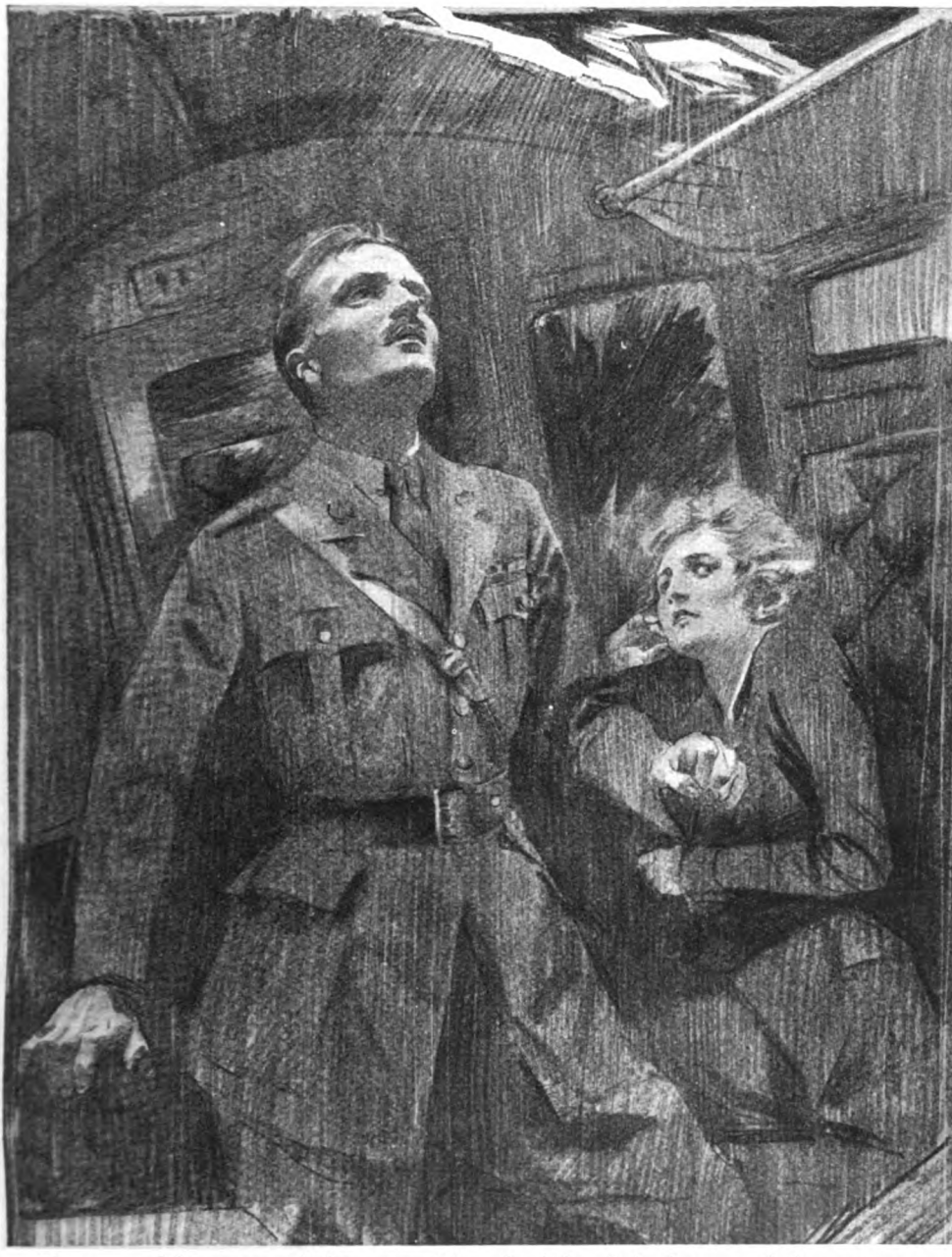
"It's the life I'd have died for a day of," she said, for indeed she was, as he had said, brave.

So they held each other very close and were silent and waited. And her eyes were blind with tears. And at last, quite suddenly, he leaped up, putting her from him, and cried out, in a strange, hoarse, croaking voice:—

"Light—there's light!"

And she opened her eyes and there was light—the light of the lanterns of the rescuers—and they were saved. (The doctors said a great deal about the effect of sudden shocks on the nerves. He and she believe in miracles.)

And when they had crawled along the narrow earthy passage and come out of the tunnel to the good light of day they faced each other, dusty, disordered, with faces streaked with her tears—and not hers only—and gazed upon each other as the first man and woman must have gazed upon each other in Paradise.



She opened her eyes and there was light the light of the lanterns of the rescuers— and they were saved.

"And this is *you!*" he said; "but I've never seen you before!"

"I never dared to let you see my real face before," she said, and their eyes embraced.

"You all right?" said the doctor over his shoulder as he bustled past. "Come on, then, and help these other people."

So their new life began in joint service to those who had been hurt and broken in the shock that had brought to them only Love and Light

£500 REWARD

by

J.J.BELL

ILLUSTRATED BY H.COLLER

THE season was over at Challis Bay; the boarding-houses were deserted; in the old-fashioned Queen's Hotel only two visitors remained. But it was a wonderful October in its calmness and mildness, and Mr. Bask, the genial host, was given to impressing upon these two that they were favoured with the weather of the year.

Strangers, they had arrived together, travelling, as it chanced, in the same compartment, ten days ago; and it had seemed natural enough to exchange remarks on the marvellous sunset that greeted them when they met later in the doorway of the hotel. There was nothing obtrusive about Harold Lugar, a man of thirty or so, with a finely-cut shaven countenance and grave grey eyes; and Mildred Elmore had been a journalist long enough to accept the situation without affectation of shyness. She was a dark, pretty girl, still frail-looking after the serious illness—a breakdown due to overwork—that had held her prisoner in London all the summer. Without near relatives, and with all her friends now on duty, she had dreaded a lonely time of recuperation at Challis Bay, and she was by no means sorry to meet, as fellow-guest, a man who had travelled much and who was interested in books and writers.

A pleasant friendliness developed, and when three days had passed they ceased to take their meals at different tables, the discreet host having privately sounded each on the question and arranged a table in the window accordingly. They walked on the cliffs, did some boating and a little mild golf together, and in the evenings they found enough to talk about. And all the time Mildred Elmore had the feeling that she had seen Harold Lugar before. But the idea was so vague that she had refrained from mentioning it; besides, to have done so would have suggested curiosity on her part, and she had noted the fact that he never spoke of himself or his affairs. Still, she wondered a good deal about the man, as she admitted to herself.

She was wondering now, in the privacy of her room, whither she had gone to put on her hat and a wrap. The night was lovely with moonshine, and after dinner he had asked her, for the first time at such an hour, to walk with him on the sands. She had hesitated, then assented. Her time at Challis Bay was nearly over. She must get back to London and work, for those four months of enforced idleness and extra expenses had seriously drained her resources. But she would enjoy the holiday hours while they lasted, and afterwards——

The wrap she wanted was, with others, in a strap which, thanks to the kindly weather, she had not required to unfasten since her arrival. As she loosened it, a couple of magazines and a newspaper fell out. She laid the magazines on the dressing-table, and was about to drop the old newspaper into the hearth, when the big print over a double-column announcement caught her eye.

"£500 Reward!" She recollected idly glancing at it on the morning of her

departure from London, thinking what a useful sum it would be to herself just then. It was offered by the enterprising *Daily Vivat* for information which should lead to the apprehension of one Anthony Lindsay, who was "wanted" in connection with the Burnham Mansions tragedy. Mildred had given little attention to newspapers during her convalescence, but she had learned the main facts of the case—namely, that Leonard Hastings, a wealthy bachelor and man-about-town, had been found dead in his flat, and that he had evidently been severely handled before being shot through the heart. The murderer was supposed to have gone to France by aeroplane, and the Continent was being searched for him.

"£500 Reward!"

It was as though the mere feel of the newspaper had stimulated imagination. As if compelled, she unfolded the paper, and forced herself to look at the portrait of Anthony Lindsay, the wanted man. It was the reproduction of a photograph of what is known as three-quarter face—not a satisfactory sort of likeness for identifying purposes, unless to a familiar. But for a week, at every meal, Mildred had sat at right-angles to Harold Lugar, and——

The paper slipped from her hands. She sank back, feeling sick and faint. "It can't be!" she whispered, and her intelligence answered, "But it is!" The moustache in the portrait went for nothing. The countenances of Anthony Lindsay and Harold Lugar were identical. The man who was wanted on the capital charge and the man now waiting to escort her on the sands in the moonlight were one and the same! It seemed far too horrible, yet she had no hope that she might be mistaken. Her only hope was that by some evil chance this Anthony Lindsay had been wrongly suspected. In her heart she could not hold Harold Lugar guilty of murder, and yet—and yet she must somehow make certain. What was she to do?

OUT on the landing a clock struck nine, and she started up. He had been waiting for her a whole hour! What was he thinking—suspecting? Fear came upon her. Would it not be best to remain where she was, leave early in the morning, and see him no more? Ah, but she wanted to see him again, if only for the last time, if only to save or slay that faintly lingering hope of hers.

Aware of her pallor, she splashed cold water on her face and dried it harshly. At the last moment, thinking to spare him and herself, she took in her hand the paper, refolded, exhibiting only the heading, "£500 Reward." Then, summoning all her self-control, she left the room and descended.

At the turn of the stair she felt like retreating. He was standing in the doorway gazing seawards, an unlighted cigarette between his fingers—a well-set-up young man, with nothing furtive about him. Setting her teeth, crushing the paper in her hand, yet holding it prominently, Mildred continued the descent. She had reached the level before he turned. At the critical moment she could not meet his eyes, and so she missed the look of pained understanding that flashed across his countenance. Nor could she find a word to say. He, too, was silent.

He held the door open, and they passed out into the silvery night. Without speech they crossed the road and took the path leading to the beach. Arrived on the firm sand he lit his cigarette, and when they had covered a hundred yards he said, quietly:—

"Well, Miss Elmore, what about that five hundred pounds reward?"

She was not prepared for a question so direct, and her response was a cry: "Oh, don't say it was you who killed him!"

"Leonard Hastings deserved what he got. The earth is a cleaner place without him," was the reply.

It was a still world save for the soft laughter of the wavelets on the beach. Horror was upon the girl, yet she did not shrink from the man. At last she said:—

"But you did not mean to kill him."

"Does that greatly matter? I thrashed him and then"—a pause—"then I ran away; took aeroplane to France, came back to England by the first steamer—simple but unexpected. So they are looking for me on the Continent. Still, I'm bound to be discovered before very long, and—well, I'd rather you had the five hundred pounds than anybody else."

"Please don't!" she murmured.

"You told me yesterday that with five hundred pounds behind you, you could drop newspaper work for a year and get that fine book written."

With a gesture she stopped him. "I am leaving by the early train to-morrow and shall forget that I met you here."

"You must complete your holiday," he returned. "I shall go by the early train." He sighed. "But won't you take the five hundred pounds and remember me? To take the money won't hurt me, but to be forgotten——"

"Oh, hush! You know I could not betray you."

There was another silence till he said, gently:—

"This must have been a horrid shock to

you. You must wonder now how I ever dared to speak to you."

"Yes, I do wonder," she answered, slowly, "and the only explanation I can find is that you are not—not really guilty. You may have killed him, but——" She broke off helplessly.

"It seems that you wish to think the best of me, and I thank you," he replied, with barely-concealed emotion. "I did not imagine that you would willingly apply for the reward, though I'd sooner you got it than a stranger—and a stranger is bound to get it before long. In this little town, this afternoon, a man seemed to recognize me, and, when you come to think of it, thousands of people all over the country must be on the look-out. Five hundred pounds is a fair sum—almost as good as a football competition prize!" He gave a faint laugh.

"Mr. Lugar," she exclaimed, "why don't you try to get right away?"

He looked at her with tenderness. "Would you, if you could, help me to escape?"

"Yes! Tell me how!"

They had come to a halt, both very pale in the cold moonlight.

"Thank you again," he said; "but I must take my chance. Let us go back, lest I say more than I ought."

They had retraced their steps a little distance when Mildred, controlling her voice, said:—

"You must have hated the man. He must have injured you terribly."

"I hated him intensely. He was making a woman's life unbearable, and she was my—my oldest friend. He had some secret hold over her, and was attempting to get her away from her husband, a good fellow dying of an incurable disease. He threatened to hand certain letters to the husband——"

"The beast!"

"In desperation the woman appealed to me. I went to his flat in the evening. His man, who was just going out, admitted me. I did what I had come to do and left the flat, and—well, I'm afraid that's all."

"But—but did you go there with the intention of shooting him?"

"No."

She drew a long breath. "I was sure of it! It wasn't"—her voice fell to a whisper—"really murder, and he deserved it."

Once more they halted.

"It matters to you!" cried the man. "Mildred, you—you do care a little." Then—"Forgive me; I had no right to say that."

"But you have said it! Tell me how I can help you. I will do anything——"

"Dear," he said, "there is only one possible way of escape, and it is not in your hands nor in mine. I have not told you the whole story—I must not tell it—but since you care a little, I will tell you one or two things. I did not kill Leonard Hastings——"

"I knew it!"

"I had just left the building after thrashing him when a taxi drove up to the door. A man got out, went up in the automatic lift, rang Hastings's bell, and when he answered the door shot him with an air pistol, shut the door, and came away."

"You knew the man?"

"I can tell you no more. And what I have told you is a secret between us, Mildred." He took her hand and kissed it. "Come, let us go. I'm weak, and a man in my situation has no right to dreams."

"When you need me, I shall be ready," she said, softly.

With no more words they returned to the hotel.

A CLOSED car was standing at the door. Two men were waiting in the vestibule, and at sight of them Mildred caught at her companion's arm.

One of the men stepped forward. "Anthony Lindsay, I have a warrant for your arrest on the charge of——"

"That's all right! I suppose I may settle my bill and so on."

At this point the landlord, looking naturally perturbed, came forward holding out a note. "Telephone message, ten minutes ago."

The young man glanced inquiringly at the detective, who nodded permission, and took the paper. As he read the words his face was grave, though an unmistakable light came into his eyes.

He turned to the landlord, handing him a five-pound note. "I think that will cover the bill for the present. Kindly keep my luggage till sent for." To the detective he said, "I'm quite ready." And while the man looked rather taken aback, he went over to Mildred. "Good night," he whispered. "I hope the moon will shine again to-morrow night."

A minute later he was borne away in the car.

Mildred was making for the stairs when the landlord overtook her. The good man was obviously distressed.

"Miss Elmore, I'm downright sorry," he stammered, "but who'd have thought it of him?"

To his amazement she smiled kindly.

One of the men stepped forward. "Anthony Lindsay, I have a warrant for your arrest."

"Don't think it of him, Mr. Bask. Good night."

Mr. Bask retired to his parlour, wagging his head. "Either she knows something, or she's terribly in love with him," he remarked to his wife.

"I'm thinkin' 'tis more love than knowledge," that wise woman returned. "'Tis a pity ye didn't have your eyes open and win the five hundred pounds yourself."

"But he's maybe not guilty."

"Doesn't matter. The newspaper offered the money for information leadin' to his apprehension."

"Well, well, I wonder who has got it?" sighed Mr. Bask.

Mildred wondered too, and wished the winner no good of the prize. But she wondered still more about other things. He had said "good night," not "good-bye." What had it meant? She could only trust and hope. It was a long, though not altogether an unhappy night.

And the following day was long also. In the afternoon she walked so far that darkness was falling on her return to the hotel.

The landlord handed her a letter delivered by the evening post. The envelope, with its typewritten address, suggested business. A cheque would be welcome. She took it into the sitting-room, sat down, and opened it. The big sheet bore the startling heading, *The Daily View*, and as she read she felt like fainting.

"Dear Madam,—Your telegram of yesterday's date duly reached this office, and the information it contained led to the prompt apprehension of Mr. Anthony Lindsay. You are, therefore, entitled to the reward of £500 (Five Hundred Pounds) offered by the proprietors of this journal, and if you will call here at your early convenience the same shall be paid to you. It is without any regrets that we now learn that the authorities have withdrawn the charge against Mr. Anthony Lindsay——"

Someone entered the room, and Mildred turned with a start to see Mr. Anthony Lindsay himself.

Springing to her feet she cried: "I never sent any telegram!"

"I know," he replied, softly. "Please forgive me. I sent it after feeling the suspicious looks of that chap in the town. You see, I feared I might be locked up for a long time, and I wanted you to get writing that book."

"Oh!" The tears came to her eyes. "But how could you think I would have taken the money?"

"Well, I didn't know you so well in the afternoon as I did in—in the moonlight. Please don't be angry. I have come for your kindness. My poor brother-in-law is dead, leaving a confession of having shot Leonard Hastings, who had sent him a wicked, lying letter about his wife, my sister."

"Ah, how terrible for you! And—and you knew all the time it was your brother-in-law?"

He nodded. "I knew also that he could not live long. There was nothing for it but to do as I did—accept suspicion for the time being."

"It was a dreadful risk."

"Well, it's over." Anthony sighed and turned to the window. Presently he said: "The moon is rising. There is still half an hour till supper-time. Will you come?"

They went down to the beach.

"That money—they can't make me take it, can they?" she said, abruptly.

"You would have to explain that the telegram wasn't yours, and then I might be put in jail after all!"

"Oh!"

"I can suggest only one thing, Mildred."

"What?"

"That you take me and ask them to pay the money to one of the hospitals."

The moon may have observed just how Mildred treated this brilliant suggestion; for us it is—or ought to be—sufficient to know that they were very late for the special supper which Mr. and Mrs. Bask had blithely prepared.

NEXT MONTH:

"The Adventure of the Creeping Man,"

A NEW SHERLOCK HOLMES STORY,

By A. CONAN DOYLE.

Real Success in Life

by

ARNOLD BENNETT

Illustrated by A. K. Macdonald.

AT LOGGERHEADS.

THE other morning in the street I overheard a young man saying violently to a companion :—

"It's everyone for himself in this world, and I tell you straight I shall——"

As I couldn't stand still and listen I didn't catch what dreadful thing the young man intended to do, but he had said enough to show me that the truth was not in him and that he was set on making the worst of life while vainly hoping to make the best of it.

The young man, representative of a whole school of social philosophy, lacked faith in human nature and in the friendliness of mankind. He was enjoying all the rights and privileges of an organized community, and yet had not realized that, if his own theory had been generally practised, no organized society could ever have come into existence, and we should still be savagely clubbing one another in the primeval landscape. Of course, he wanted all his rights and privileges to continue, and at the same time he wanted to be free himself to act just as though the community did not exist. His attitude towards society was all wrong, and his estimate of the average man was all wrong. Doubtless he was of an immensely selfish disposition. Doubtless also he had been through some unfortunate experience which had led to the discovery that human nature is not yet absolutely perfect, and which had distorted his vision.

Nothing is more fatal to the quest for earthly happiness than a general antipathy to, and contempt for, one's fellow-creatures. And nothing can be more unjust or more conceited. Your average fellow-creature is a very decent person, inspired by a fair amount of kindliness and a quite active conscience and sense of duty. Your average fellow-creature is not always thinking of himself and fighting for his own hand. He thinks constantly of the community and constantly curbs his desires in the interests of the community—which interests, by the way, he has wisdom enough to see are ultimately his own interests.

How do I know all this? What reasons have I for such an optimistic conclusion concerning the average man?

The answer to these questions is that the community, with all its enormous admitted advantages, could not have come into being, and could not be maintained, if the average member of it were not a very decent person with a sense of duty and plenty of self-control and an instinct to play the game and a certain readiness for self-sacrifice. If the average member of society were the individualistic beast of prey that my young man made him out to be, the community, could it by some miracle ever have been created, would infallibly fly to pieces in about a fortnight. The measure of the average person is the community of which he forms part. If some justice and some security and some comfort prevail steadily in the community, then the average person in it is not an individual to be despised or detested or even sneezed at. He deserves to be liked and to be respected. And those who do not like or respect him are either ungrateful, or wicked, or ill, or self-centred coxcombs, or mere idiots. This is sure.

No one can live even fairly comfortably, not to say happily, who is at loggerheads with the community surrounding him. Such a state of antagonism, if it exists at all, is usually continuous, and it directly or indirectly affects every relation. It is like a permanent state of war. It is like the ceaseless slight poisoning of the body from some cause whose irritating activity never slackens. It is like the operation of a deep grudge. It amounts to an indictment of mankind. It means that in your opinion

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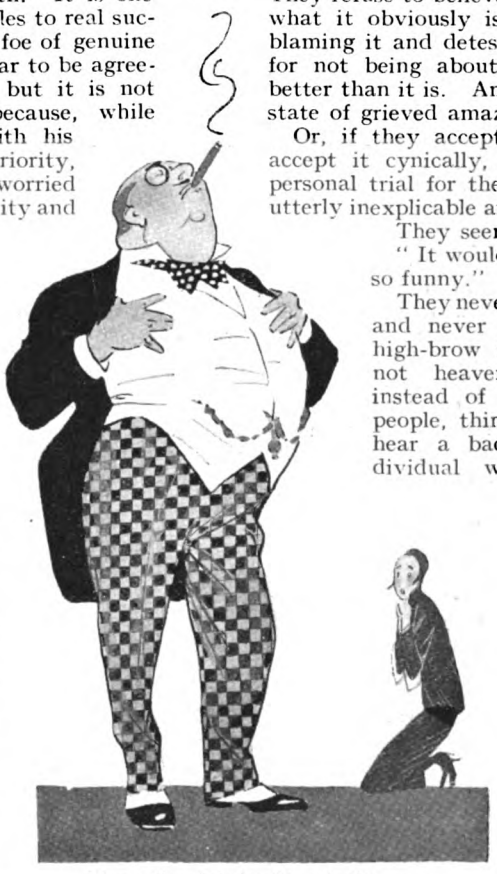
all mankind is wrong and you are right, and Heaven has for some reason or other singled *you* out to be the sole repository of wisdom. It makes you self-right ous, and here in my view is the very worst of it. Self-righteousness is an affliction of the deadliest kind. (Fortunately it is not catching, though acutely painful to the closer companions of the sufferer.) It is the greatest producer of social friction on earth. It is one of the greatest obstacles to real success in life. It is the foe of genuine felicity. It may appear to be agreeable to the sufferer; but it is not in fact agreeable, because, while naturally delighted with his own marvellous superiority, the poor fellow is worried to death by the stupidity and ignorance of the rest of the race and by the impossibility of lifting them up to his own level. At intervals also he is visited by the horrid suspicion that he is an ass in the eyes of the world, which he certainly is.



Naturally delighted with his own marvellous superiority.

It is nearly as important—I would go farther and say that it is quite as important—that a man should live at inward peace with human nature at large as with the human nature of his own family and household. He is not bound to agree completely with the standards and practices of other people, but he is bound to admit in all friendliness and modesty that they are on the average just as well-intentioned as himself and not more sinful than himself. He is bound not to despise or hate. He is bound to be charitable. He is bound to dispose himself, so far as he possibly can, to love his fellow-creatures. He is bound, at any rate, not to repudiate them. He is bound to discipline himself with the frequent reflection: "After all, who am *I*?" And he must remember that, no matter to what extent the standards and practices of the community fall short of his own unique ideals, the community is human and he is human.

He must say:—

"*This is what human nature is; and I am part of it.*"

Some persons, too many persons, pass their lives in being astonished at the imperfections of human nature. They get up every morning, and every morning are pained and shocked afresh by the same old manifestations of the humanity in us. They refuse to believe that human nature is what it obviously is, and they persist in blaming it and detesting it and scorning it for not being about a hundred per cent. better than it is. And they die in the same state of grieved amazement.

Or, if they accept human nature, they accept it cynically, as a bad joke, as a personal trial for themselves, as something utterly inexplicable and deplorable.

They seem to say:—

"It would be tragic if it wasn't so funny."

They never get used to the earth, and never cease from making a high-brow fuss because earth is not heaven. They habitually, instead of thinking the best of people, think the worst. If they hear a bad account of an individual with whom they are unacquainted they will, on making his acquaintance, view him in the light of that account. They will have nothing to do with one of the wisest of old maxims: "Take people as *you* find them"—not as others find them. They assume that humanity is guilty until it is proved innocent, instead of assuming it to be innocent until it is proved guilty. They prosecute and they also sit on the bench and deliver judgment.

All this is very silly, narrow-minded, and intolerant of them; and further, it is extremely prejudicial to themselves. It sours their lives and ruins their judgment. And it has no beneficial effect on human nature, which will blandly follow its own course, like a river that a dog barks at.

I do not assert that the pure type which I have attempted to describe is numerously represented among us, though Heaven knows there are more than enough of it. The significant point is that we all of us in a greater or less degree partake of that regrettable

type. The ridiculous self-sufficient prig lurks in all of us, a dangerous microbe. And it behoves us to keep a careful eye on him and crush him vigorously at short intervals. Otherwise he is capable of undoing most of the improvements in ourselves achieved by our high aspirations and our desperate struggles towards the light.

Further. Not to live in a real accord of esteem, friendship, and understanding with your community is fundamentally wrong because it is fundamentally unnatural. Your case may, of course, be exceptional, but the chances are a thousand to one that you are yourself of the very blood of the community. Hundreds, thousands of the people you see in the street have the same blood as yours in their veins. Go far enough back and you will find common stock. Your traditions are the same. You were nourished in the same ideas. You have the same climate. You are accustomed to the same sights. You suffer under the same disabilities and enjoy the same advantages. You are all moving together in the same stage of the same evolution. Compared to these tremendous similarities, differences of temperament, brain, and education are slight —as you always discover when a foreigner or a stranger of any kind arrives on the scene.

And it is almost certain that you yourself have many of the faults which you complain of in the community. After all, the community is not to blame for not being perfect. It is fulfilling the decrees of destiny and pushing forward to the poor best of its ability. As for you, so for the community, life is rather hard and still more disappointing, the eternal purpose being singularly mysterious and difficult of comprehension. And, anyway, you are just as responsible as anybody else for the community. You cannot honestly wash your hands of it.

Here I want to insist that this bond which I am indicating includes not merely your own circle but the whole of the self-governing community. Many people who are conscientiously loyal to their own circle repudiate the community. To a certain extent we all do so. And to that extent we are all wrong. Indeed, I should put this too frequent neglect of the community as a whole among the worst of our social sins, among the sins which in the end do the most to impede the progress of mankind. And that it reacts unfavourably on one's individual existence cannot be doubted. I should like to know what would be the result if we all repudiated, neglected, and despised the community as some of us do. One result would assuredly be that the community as a community would fall into a decline and cease to be.

I willingly admit that you may have been unfortunate. You may have been born too soon. It may well be that you would have felt more at home a thousand years hence, after the community had had ten centuries in which to improve itself up to your level. And what then? What are you going to do about it? Bear a grudge against the eternal purpose? Don't attempt it. Nothing could be more absurd. Abnormally great and wise though you may be, the eternal purpose will beat you if you cross it. Accept it. Fall in with it. Go farther and you will fare worse. Your natural community is the community for you, and the more you study it and the better you understand it, the more comfortable you will be. Also, if you are so much superior to your environment, is not your duty all the more plain and urgent to do what you can to ameliorate your environment? This brings me to the second and complementary part of community life.

Too many persons pass their lives in being astonished at the imperfections of human nature.

WORKING FOR THE COMMUNITY.

The fact is that one of the chief reasons, if not the chief reason, for your dissatisfaction with our poor common humanity as shown in the life of the community is that you and people like you take no part in it. You criticize it harshly enough,

but you leave it alone. Which is either very illogical of you or very selfish. Why do you adopt this harmful attitude? I call the attitude harmful because your abstention leaves the field of public activity open to a certain number of persons who see a chance of exploiting the corporate life for their own advantage.

Well, you do not abstain from mere sloth, nor often from a conviction that you are unsuited to public tasks. You abstain partly because you have insufficient genuine faith in mankind and partly because you are frightened by the hugeness of the business of reform and improvement.

If, however, you lack faith, the reason is that you are uneducated, you are ignorant of history, which is one long demonstration of the power of communities to improve. I doubt if the community in which you live is more imperfect than you yourself admit yourself to be in your moments of impartial self-examination. Yet it is the rarest thing for you to lose faith in yourself; nor does the awful multiplicity of your failings prevent you from continually making good resolutions and continually trying to put them into practice.

If every member of the community actively set himself to improve the community, the community would improve. But even so it would not improve rapidly. The big movements are slow movements. The movements which produce lasting effects are slow movements. And also they are complicated movements, made up of a million or so smaller movements. Results in improvement are got by people who have not only faith but patience, and who are content to do one thing, and generally one little thing, at a time. It happens to many of us to throw ourselves into a movement of reform or good deeds, and then to abandon it because we have not brought about the millennium in six months or six years.

"Mankind is incorrigible," we say. "There is no doing anything with it. Here have I honestly and energetically put my back into this movement, and I've been thwarted by idiots and scoundrels at every turn, and things are as bad as ever. I shall retire."

But mankind is not incorrigible. There *is* something to be done with it. We have not been quite thwarted at quite every turn. Things are not as bad as ever. And we have no right to retire. We have merely the right to be patient and persevering and not to behave like an impulsive infant.

No corner of the field is too small to occupy. No effort is too humble to produce an effect worth producing. No effort is wasted. And there will never be any millennium, you know! The millennium is a chimera. A millennium involves perfection. A hundred centuries hence the citizens of those days-to-come, regarding us of the twentieth century somewhat as we regard the inhabitants of the Stone Age, will still be yearning towards the millennium and still be shocked by the scandalous imperfections of their humanity and the inefficiency of their communities. There can be no finality except death. The dream of a millennium is a device of Nature's, and a very effective and agreeable device, for encouraging us to be persistent.

THE WAY TO WORK.

Some of us with unquiet consciences would like to do something for the community, but we are held back by a too narrow conception of what public work is. When we think of public work we think of electioneering, speechifying, canvassing, campaigning, conspiring, lobbying, and a general prominence in the local newspaper. And we say to ourselves, no doubt quite truly, that we could never stand that sort of thing even if we had the capacity to take a hand in it.

But "that sort of thing," though important enough and absolutely essential to the functioning of any community which in any degree governs itself, is not the only sort of thing. Everybody who helps in the education, or the pleasures, or the charities, or the religions, or the arts of a community engages in public work. Everybody who does anything from an unselfish motive and at personal inconvenience for the betterment of the community or a part of the community, in any matter however small, engages in public work. And there is more than enough public work to employ everybody who desires to help. Even apart from urgent work which no one has yet thought of beginning, there is more than enough public work actually begun to satisfy the appetites of the most energetic. A very little inquiry will show that organizations exist everywhere for leaving the world better than they found it, and that nearly all of them are hampered by a lack of working-adherents. The difficulty is not to find scope for activity; the difficulty is to choose among many scopes and to choose wisely.

And a still greater difficulty is to go to work in the right spirit. We are apt to start too complacently, as though the mantles of all the prophets had descended upon us and we were the first persons that ever had dedicated ourselves to public work. We are apt also to start too uncompromisingly. We have our principles and we cannot recede from them. We will sacrifice everything, our leisure, our health, our peace of mind;

but not our principles. Principles are sacred. Etc. This would be a grand theory if our own principles were the only principles in the world. But everybody has principles, and, when you examine them, the principles of no two persons are exactly alike. Hence, if everybody was as rigid as ourselves, public work would have to be done by a vast number of separate organizations, and each organization would consist of just one individual and no more. Hence also there is a chance that our own principles may not be the final word of all wisdom. Be it known to all inexperienced enthusiasts for bettering the world that compromise is of the very essence of such work—yes, compromise even on principles, which no more than anything else are exempt from criticism and continual modification.

"My dear fellow, it's so simple. If you will only give it a moment's thought!"

Another pit into which the tyro is liable to fall is what I will term the "simplicity delusion"—usually accompanied by the "sole remedy delusion."

"My dear fellow, it's so simple. I can show it you on half a sheet of paper. If you will only give it a moment's thought! The thing to be done is X (X being the beloved nostrum). Neglect X and you will come to naught. Do X and everything will be all right."

To which earnest nonsense the reply is that no public problem is simple—far from it, and that there is no simple cure for any public ill, and that those devoted public workers who put their faith in a simple remedy for a simple ill are in serious danger of becoming public nuisances.

THE REASONS FOR WORKING.

There are three reasons why it is essential to right living that we should enter into some form of work on behalf of the community. The first is that such work is an antidote to that besetting selfishness of outlook, attitude, and activity which is common to nearly all of us, and which is perhaps the chief cause of all our discontent and unhappiness; a superlative corrective for that maxim, at once fatal and absurd, that "it's everyone for himself in this world."

Any person made miserable by his own disappointments and woes can prove the truth of what I say by going straight off and doing something for somebody else without any expectation of advantage to himself. He will immediately feel better; his glance will be brighter; his courage will be increased; and his view of the entire world will be altered. This is a certainty. It is a certainty which may conceivably annoy thousands of people who, like myself, have no use for priggishness, self-righteousness, and the sensation which boys and girls contemptuously describe as "pi." It may set their teeth on edge like the sound of scratching on a slate. But a certainty it is.

You may object that a man who, for example, is working for his family practises all the unselfishness that ought to be demanded from a human being. I do not agree. The family is a unit of which the breadwinner is the core, and in working for the family he is working for himself and for something which he primarily originated for the satisfying of his own instincts. There is an egotism of the family which may be as hard and fierce as a purely personal egotism. Self-sacrifice on behalf of one's family may be altruism, but it is an altruism within an enlarged egotism. And it is not enough. The community is a bigger thing than the family, as the war has proved, and the need of the family is not an excuse for neglecting the community.

The second reason is that the work for the community, in addition to constituting a valuable moral exercise and discipline, is directly and unmistakably advantageous to ourselves. Not merely does it tend to improve the community, with agreeable consequences to the members of the community, but it tends to improve the community in the particular manner in which we personally desire it to be improved.

And in addition it necessarily enlarges our knowledge of mankind. Everybody who indulges in public work must meet people, and all kinds of people, whom otherwise he never would meet. His acquaintance is multiplied, and he may even make new and precious friends; his perspective is corrected; he sees things in new lights; his powers of diplomacy are brought into play; and above all he learns the deep practical truth that it takes all sorts to make a world. In a sentence, public activity, however humble, educates the worker as nothing else can; it completes his education, in so far as education can be completed; it is the "finishing school" of life.

The third reason is an amplification of the second—the second perceived in a broader aspect. Work for the community is the best of all safeguards against the temptation to *avoid* life. Clearly if you avoid life you cannot make the best of life. Life is admittedly difficult; if it wasn't it would only be a sort of death. There is no sense in actually creating difficulties; but equally there is no sense in running away from difficulties which exist. To do so would be as wise as to cut your legs off because walking gives you corns. You would have no more corns, but also you would have no more walking, and you would be vastly less alive than if you had fairly faced the corn difficulty instead of stumbling away from it on your mutilated stumps.

Rent a house? Certainly not. Consider the servant difficulty alone!

People encumber this earth who, having had experience of the difficulties and complexities of existence, are determined to have as few of them as possible. Marry? Certainly not. Marriage is packed with trouble. Therefore they remain single. Own property? Certainly not. The property-owner is the martyr of society. His troubles range from the plumber to the tax-collector. Therefore they will own nothing. Rent a house? Certainly not. Consider the servant difficulty alone! Therefore they will not rent a house. Collect intimate friends? Certainly not. It involves you in the most tiresome complications. You have to make allowances for the friends' individualities, to accept hospitality and to give hospitality in return. Therefore they confine themselves to acquaintances. They live in hotels or furnished service-flats; they obtain books from a lending library; they join a golf club; they hire a car by the half-day. And thus they avoid every difficulty and complication. Their sole trouble is that they are the most melancholy and bored individuals on the face of the landscape, because from cowardice or sloth they are avoiding life. They have simplified life.

True! But they have knocked it senseless too.

To live wisely is to live fully, to live with all your faculties, to live all the time, to feel deeply and variously, and always—up to a given age—to find the day a trifle too short for the day's doings. It is better to have too many interests than too few. It is better to be worried to death than to die in the sleep of boredom. Not that I am advocating any form of decease, and I should seriously object to being worried to death. Worry in excess is a crime on the part of the person who permits himself to be worried. Worry is a form of friction. The task of the expert in life is to run his machine with the maximum of activity and the minimum of friction. If he stops or slows the machine because he cannot otherwise deal with the friction, then life has beaten him. The general human tendency is to stop friction by partially stopping the machine—especially after what is loosely called "success" has been attained. Real success in life is the full smooth-running exploitation of the whole machine with daily satisfaction to the mechanic. And nothing else is real success in life.

A COUPLE OF "DOWN-AN'-OUTS"

by

W. TOWNEND

ILLUSTRATED BY HOWARD ELCOCK

WITHOUT any warning, the man with the cornet outside the public-house began to play, loudly and incorrectly, "Land of Hope and Glory!"

Danny Creath leant against the nearest wall to listen, and his mood being in keeping with the cold white fog, he laughed cynically.

"Not much hope!" he said. "An' less glory, eh, mate!"

A small, red-headed man, derelict like himself, but, unlike himself, dirty and unshaven and blear-eyed, spat on the pavement and shuffled off. Even now Danny was proud of his appearance: his clothes might be old and patched, his boots in need of repair, yet his face was as smooth and as clean as though he were due for parade in five minutes' time. He watched the red-headed man uneasily. Supposing that some day, in the years to come, he should sink to his level.

The tune dragged on and on dolefully and ended abruptly on a note that was half-way between a yelp of agony and a groan of despair. The musician, a fat, shabby man, scowled as though he recognized at last that in such surroundings there could be no real appreciation for his talent.

Presently he put the instrument to his lips again.

"Damn!" said Danny Creath.

For all at once the grey street and the tall warehouses and the cranes and the waiting drays and the corner public-house and the melancholy groups of unemployed had vanished; and under a blue sky, the dust rising in clouds, the Battery, his Battery, went galloping past, in perfect alignment, traces taut, horses well in the collar, hoofs drumming on the dry turf, to the music of cavalry bands at the saluting point playing "Bonnie Dundee!" the one tune in the world that could bring a lump to a man's throat and drag him away from the present into the past.

"Here, you!" said Danny Creath, sharply. "Chuck it, or I'll kill you!"

The tune came to a sudden stop. The fat man stared at him in amazement, his eyes bulging. After a short pause, he began playing once more.

Danny clenched his fists and took a step away from the wall where he had been resting. The musician lowered his cornet.

"Look 'ere!" he began, in a pained voice. Then he walked quickly off.

"What's the matter with you, eh?"

Danny wheeled and saw a policeman standing in front of him: a very big, very young policeman, with a plump round face and large feet.

"Lookin' for trouble, or what?" asked the policeman.

Danny whistled softly to himself.

"You've been a soldier," said the policeman, apparently inspecting the medal ribbons on his waistcoat; "you oughter have more sense!"

Danny smiled. Policemen, young policemen especially, annoyed him always.

"What were you in?" asked the policeman. "Infantry?"

"Gord, no! Artillery! Royal Horse!"

"Easy," said the policeman. "It was us foot sloggers did the work, of course!"

"You wouldn't have done much good without the guns," said Danny, "for all your talk!"

"Wouldn't we?" said the policeman, who seemed taken aback. "Oh, well, we won't argue. But you try an' keep a civil tongue in your head! See! An' what are you hangin' round here for?"

'Nothin'," said Danny. "I'm lost! I ain't been in this Gord-forsaken part of London before, wherever it is! If my

chauffeur don't pick me up soon with the limousine I'll be up against it! I'm due at the Ritz at seven-thirty to dine with the Prime Minister!"

"Haven't you got a home?" said the policeman.

"No," said Danny. "I would have, though, if I gave you a punch on the jaw for askin' too many questions, wouldn't I?"

The big young policeman frowned. "Maybe I'd give you a lickin' an' let you go, without runnin' you in at all!"

"They choose 'em by weight in the police force, of course," said Danny, "like they choose prize——"

"Prize what?" said the policeman, coldly.

"Funny!" said Danny. "The word's just slipped me!"

"It's as well for you that it has," said the policeman. "You're too smart, you are! Better clear out o' here quick where I can't see you!"

He walked ponderously away. Danny smiled scornfully. Put him on horseback, a man that shape, and where would he be? Nowhere! And yet he had plenty to eat, by the look of him, and a job as well! He was lucky.

From the open door of a little eating-house Danny smelt food cooking: sausages and potatoes and cabbage; and he shivered and he knew suddenly what it was to be tempted. As he turned, feeling miserable and unhappy, in spite of his victory over the policeman, he saw men and horses coming toward him down the crowded street between the warehouses and the waiting drays and lorries.

Interested, without knowing why, he waited to watch the horses pass. He envied the men in charge of them, just as he envied any man whose work took him among horses, even such wretched specimens as these. For as they drew near the corner where he was standing, tied together in threes, Danny saw in their large brown eyes the look that he had seen in the eyes of Battery horses under fire, or when the first faint whiff of the gas came over from the German lines! They knew that something terrible was going to happen, and they were frightened.

A square brown man, who squinted and wore a shabby blue suit and a peaked cap on the back of his head and a blue jersey, halted by Danny's side.

"Where are they takin' them horses?" asked Danny.

"Eh?" said the brown man. "Why, docks, of course."

"Not much of a bunch, are they?"

"Wouldn't be goin' aboard ship if they was! I'm a sailor. I know. Look at this little lot!"

A MAN had appeared, leading the last three horses, a brown, a grey, and a chestnut. The brown horse, brown with a white star on his forehead and two white socks on his forelegs, was plunging and backing, and the man tugged at the head-rope and cursed.

"That ain't the way to treat a horse," said Danny.

He stirred restlessly, and because this horse was like that other horse, the best horse in the Army, brown with a white star and two white socks, he felt more miserable and more unhappy even than before.

"That's nothin'," said the sailor. "You oughter see 'em aboard ship, in the 'tween decks, when she's rollin' gun'les under!"

Danny did not hear him. He had moved to the edge of the path and the beating of his heart was like the roll of French seventy-fives in the distance. His throat was dry and parched. He could scarcely breathe.

One horse could be like another in colour and shape, he knew, and yet the likeness hurt him.

"I'll teach yer, you scabby devil!" growled the drover.

All at once the brown horse lashed out with his hoofs and Danny saw on the brown neck, above the dingy horse-rug, the long grey scar of a wound.

"Jack!" he yelled, hoarsely. "Jack!"

He ran forward into the street and grabbed hold of the drover's arm.

"What the blazes are you doin'?" he shouted. "Leave that horse be! He's mine!"

"Leggo my arm!" said the drover. "He ain't yours!"

"He is," said Danny. "I had him in France."

"Look 'ere," said the drover, losing his temper, "are you goin' to leggo my arm or not?"

"Where are you takin' that horse?" said Danny.

"Mate, you listen to me," said the sailor with the squint, strolling up to join in the argument. "Ol' frog-face 'ere won't tell you. See? So I'll tell you. See? He's takin' them horses aboard ship, same as I said. An' then they'll ship 'em to Belgium. Ghent, prob'ly. See?"

"What for?"

"To be killed!" said the sailor. "Knocked on the head. See? Pole-axed. I've seen 'em. Lord, yes!"

"Killed?" said Danny, and it was as though a cold hand had clutched him by the throat.

"Yes, an' eaten," said the drover with a snarl. "Leggo my arm!" He turned and shouted "Hi! some of you fellers—'ere—'elp!"

Danny's eye was cold and hard.

"Gimme that horse!" said Danny. "Sharp!"

"Go and boil yer head!" said the drover, struggling with the three horses. "Stand still, you!" He raised his stick and with the heavy knob struck the brown horse hard on the nose. "I'll teach you, you——"

The drover fell crashing into the gutter and the crowd yelled.

"Now," said Danny, "you try it again! Just once!"

Jack, his ears back, his teeth showing, was on the footpath. Danny caught hold of the head-rope.

"Whoa, boy! Steady!"

A short, thick-set man in breeches and gaiters came hurrying up, bellowing.

"'Ere's the blinkin' 'orse-dealer!" said a voice from the crowd. "Listen to 'im talk! Pretty, ain't it?"

"Wot's the ruddy gyme?" shouted the thick-set man. "Wot yer doin' with my 'orses?"

Danny watched him warily. This was the enemy, of course. This man was not stupid like the drover, he was cruel. His eyes were bloodshot and small. His mouth was thick-lipped and hard. "Gimme them dam' 'orses at once!" he stormed. "Wot the 'ell's come over everyone? You, Sam, get up——"

The sailor was sawing at the head-ropes with a clasp-knife. The horse-dealer began to shout "Police!" He made a sudden rush at Danny, and followed Sam into the gutter.

"Listen," said Danny, "this is my horse!" He saw a circle of eager faces around him and felt that he had the sympathy of the crowd. "I had him in France. Royal Horse Artillery. Four years. Wounded when I was wounded, an' now they're takin' him across to Belgium to kill him an' eat him!"

"There!" said the sailor, suddenly.

And Danny was aware of a severed rope in his hand. He pulled at it. "Come on, Jack! Come up, hoss!" As the crowd, screaming encouragement and applause, made way for him, he saw the sailor and the horse-dealer fighting: he saw also the big young policeman advancing rapidly. He heard someone yell: "Get on, mate, quick! Leave the copper to me!" He ran a few yards, dragging the horse after him, and then swung himself up on his back.

A police sergeant, a stout man with broad shoulders and a small, close-cropped black moustache, came running toward him.

The horse jibbed and balked.

"That's the man, sergeant!" shouted the young policeman. "Stop him!" His voice broke short with a muffled shriek, as though he had been choked.

"Here!" The sergeant had clutched at Jack's halter. "What's up, eh?"

He gripped Danny's knee.

An old woman thrust her head out of an upper window. "Murder!" she shrieked. "Murder!"

"Down the street, sergeant," said Danny. "They're killin' a policeman! Quick!"

"All right!" said the sergeant, "I'll take you with me!"

"Let go!" said Danny. "The horse won't stand. I done nothin', I tell you." He tried to free his knee from the sergeant's hand.

"It isn't 'im, sergeant!" screamed a girl from a doorway. "It isn't 'im! Dahn the street there, they're killin' a policeman! Myke hyste!"

Above the yells of the crowd the police whistle sounded shrill and persistent. Men and women went racing past, drawn by the noise of the fight.

Into the sergeant's eyes there had crept doubt and uncertainty, but he still held on stubbornly. But not for long.

"Throw him, Jack!" shouted Danny. And Jack, mildest and steadiest of horses but for this one trick, remembered still, tucked down his head between his forelegs and bucked. The sergeant, thrown, flung off his balance, released his grip on the head-rope and Danny's knee.

"Nah's yer chawnce!" said the girl from the doorway.

The sergeant started off at a heavy run in the direction of the riot, as Danny dug his heels into Jack's sides and galloped off, up the narrow cobbled street, away from the river and the poor wretches that were going across the Channel to God knew what!

DANNY rode on. He turned quickly down another narrow street, with small houses on either side and shops, and so through side lanes and alleys, twisting and turning, until he no longer knew whether he was headed north or east or west, or south again, back to the docks.

He passed beneath a railway arch and then, lost and suspicious of danger in front of him, policemen waiting round the bend of the empty street, or a blind alley, he dismounted by the side of a half-open gateway that led to a yard and a small house and what seemed a stable built in an arch of the railway viaduct.

Nobody was in sight.

Through the white fog he could see faintly, beyond the low brick buildings opposite, the outline of tall warehouses and chimneys, while close at hand, blending together

into a dull murmur, came the sound of wheels on cobbles, motors, the hoofs of horses, railway trains, and then, suddenly, quick footsteps approaching from the direction of the railway arch.

A sudden panic seized Danny. He dragged the horse through the gateway into the stable yard, closed the door, and lifted the iron bar into its socket.

Two men went by, talking loudly.

"He's come this way," said one. "He must have."

"If he has," said the other, "they'll nab him the other end."

The footsteps died away in the distance. Danny glanced anxiously from side to side. The door of the small red brick house overlooking the yard was shut; white curtains were drawn across the ground-floor windows. No one had seen him yet, he was positive. For the moment he was safe.

He led the horse across the yard, past a small tradesman's cart with two wheels, and a broken wagon, to the arch with the boarded front. The door was ajar and he entered and found a stable, with a stall and manger and hay-rack, dark and smelling of fusty hay, but dry underfoot—a shelter, at least.

He flung his arm about Jack's neck and began to talk to him in a low voice, almost as though they were back once more in the Battery.

"You didn't expect to see me, Jack, did you? Pretty bad time you've been havin', ain't you? Cold an' hungry an' tired, same as me, eh?" The horse nuzzled his coat. "My Gord! I'd like to meet the feller what's had charge of you the past two year! I'd——"

He stopped. Someone was walking across the yard towards the stable.

A voice broke the silence.

"Who's in there? Come on out at once!"

For one bitter heartsick moment Danny hesitated. Then he stepped out of the stable into the fog.

A girl was standing in the yard, a girl with fair hair and pink cheeks and blue eyes; bareheaded and wearing a man's overcoat over a blue frock.

"Well?" she said, looking Danny up and down. "What are you doing there?"

And there was in her manner a directness that warned him that he must speak the truth.

"They're after me," he said, simply.

"Who?"

"The police!"

"Oh!" She drew back a pace and stared at him, coolly, as though considering what she should do next, whether to deal with him herself or call for help.

"What for?" she asked.

"I stole something."

"What?" asked the girl. She showed neither fear nor scorn; she merely seemed curious.

"A horse!" said Danny. His eyes met hers without flinching. "I've done nothin' wrong, miss. You needn't believe me, but I've not. The horse, miss—why—why, I saved him! If the police took me now, I dunno what I would do. I'd kill the horse rather than let him go where he was goin'. That's the truth. Bein' cruel to horses is as bad as murder!"

THERE was a pause. The girl puckered her forehead and the tip of her small shoe tapped the cobbles impatiently.

"It won't wash," she said. "You've got to give me a better reason than that. You can't steal a horse just because you think someone's goin' to be cruel to him."

"You don't understand, miss," said Danny, patiently. "It's this way."

"Wait!" said the girl.

There came from the gate the sound of knocking.

"Was it you put the bar up?" she asked. "I must see who it is."

She turned and walked quickly away. Danny followed her as far as the broken wagon. Then, hidden from the view of anyone who might be at the gate, he halted and listened.

"Well," said the girl, "and what do you want?"

A man's voice answered her.

"You ain't seen a feller with a horse, have you, miss?"

Danny choked. She would tell, of course. And why not?

Time stood still.

"I've seen no one with a horse," said the girl.

"There's been a horse stolen. A small boy ses he saw him come this way, the man ridin' him, but we can't find him."

"I've seen no horse," said the girl. "I've not been out all day. You'd better ask someone else."

Presently she came back to where Danny was waiting.

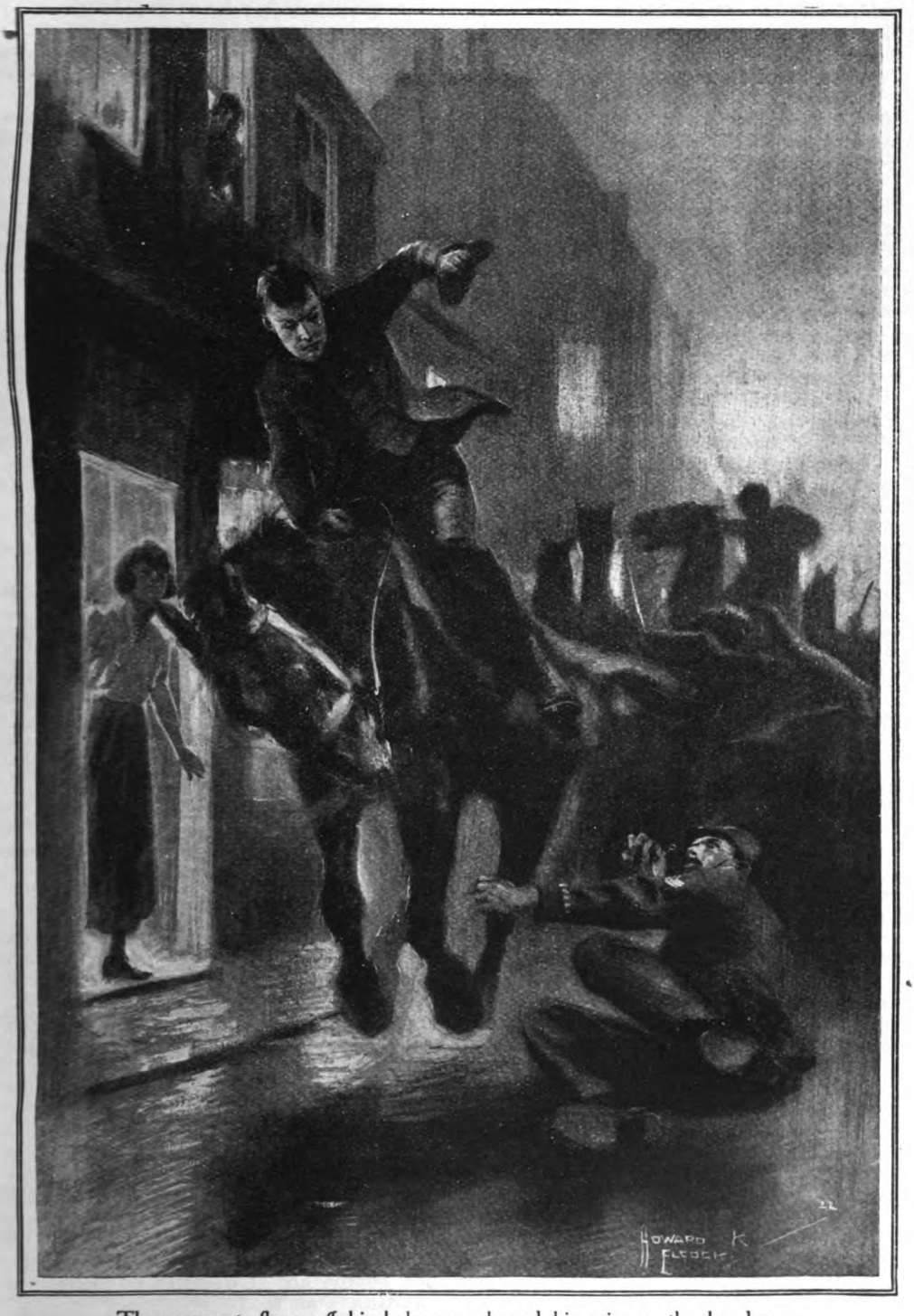
"It was a policeman," she said.

"Miss," said Danny, humbly, "I want to thank you."

"Don't thank me," she said. "Next time a policeman asks me maybe I won't be able to tell him the truth. I'll see the horse, please."

Danny took her into the little stable under the arch.

"Looks pretty thin!" she said. She stood by Jack's side and stroked him. "Poor old feller! You could do with a



The sergeant, flung off his balance, released his grip on the head-rope.
"Nah's yer chawnce!" said the girl from the doorway.

feed, I know." She turned to Dan. "Well, what's it all mean? You're as bad as the horse! Out of work?"

"Yes," said Danny. "I am."

"No reason to go about stealin', anyhow," she said, with a little frown. "You're wearin' the D.C.M. ribbon, I see. You really won that?"

Danny felt his cheeks burning.

"No," he said, "I didn't. But they gave it me, all the same. I'm not in the habit of puttin' up ribbons I'm not entitled to."

"No," said the girl, raising her eyebrows, "but you're not above stealin' a horse!"

"Miss, you listen to me an' I'll tell you. You see that scar?" He laid his finger on the mark of the wound on Jack's neck. "You see that? Shrapnel!" He lifted the horse-rug and ran his fingers through the long hair on the near hind-quarter. "An' you see this, miss? There! There's the brand still showin'! That's the Battery. Double N. NN Battery, Royal Horse Artillery."

The girl went on stroking the horse gently.

"My brother was in the Artillery," she said. "He was killed at the second battle of the Marne." Her tone hardened again. "Well, you'd better make haste. You were saying——?"

"Miss," said Danny, "I took that horse to Belgium with the Batt'ry in nineteen-fourteen to fight! To-day I saw him on the way to the docks. They were takin' him to Belgium again—to Ghent, to be killed. Yes, miss, to be killed an' eaten as butcher's meat. My horse! Well, miss, I got him away from the men that had him—fought for him. An' here we are. An' if you give me up, miss, I'll—well, I'd rather be dead an' have done with it!"

"Who's talkin' about givin' you up?" She spoke sharply, but there was a catch in her voice, and she put her hand to her throat, and, in spite of the fog and the dim light in the little arched stable, Danny thought he could see tears in her eyes.

"I never knew that we did things like that, here in England!" she said. "It's horrible! A horse that went through the war—an Artillery horse—to be sold for food—back in Belgium again!" She shivered, as though the cold had suddenly gripped her. "I'm ashamed!"

"Jack's not the only one," said Danny.

There was a silence. "The point is," said the girl, "what are you goin' to do? You took the horse, you're responsible, an' you don't know what in the world to do with him! So you bring him here! It's enough to make anyone lose patience!"

"Yes, miss," said Danny.

"He's half-starved," said the girl. She nodded toward a bucket that hung from a nail. "You'll find water the other side of the yard. There's oats in the bin in the next arch; hay as well. There's no horse been kept here for months, so he's welcome to all he can eat. Look after him! An' now I must go. I'm busy."

"I'm very grateful," said Danny. "I dunno how to begin thankin' you——"

LATER she came back to the stable door and beckoned.

"Leave the horse," she said. "I want you."

Without saying a word, Danny went with her to the house. At the door-step he hung back. "There's nothin' to be afraid of," she said, and led the way through a passage into the kitchen, where there was a stove for cooking, with a clock ticking on the mantelpiece, a deal dresser on which were arranged in rows plates and dishes and cups and saucers, and a table spread for a meal, with a white cloth and a loaf of bread, a pat of butter, a plum cake, and a pot of coffee.

Danny felt all at once bashful and out of place, but the girl opened the oven door and told him to draw up a chair and sit down.

"But, miss," said Danny, "it's not right."

The girl straightened her back and turned. In her hand she held a dish of bacon and eggs and fried potatoes, steaming hot.

"Now, look here," she said, "when did you last eat? To-day? Yesterday?"

He could say nothing.

She set down the dish in front of him and poured him a cup of coffee.

"Sugar?"

"Please."

"You want food as bad as that horse of yours," she said. "Eat, an' don't waste your time talkin'!"

She crossed the room to the window and stood staring out into the fog. Nor did she look at him, or even speak to him, until he had finished eating, and for this he was thankful. He had tried his best not to be greedy, and he had failed.

"You'll think I've got an enormous appetite," he said, "but I dunno when I've tasted bacon an' eggs an' potatoes a quarter as good as these! An' the coffee's wonderful!"

"Want any more?" she asked.

"No, miss," said Danny. "Thankin' you kindly, no. I oughtn't to be here at all, eatin' your food——"

"Talk sense," said the girl. She threw him a packet of cigarettes. "Light up. I'm goin' to talk to you."

She seated herself on a chair, at the side of the table facing the door, eyeing him curiously, as though she were trying to discover what kind of a man he was. It seemed to Danny that her blue eyes were looking right through him and reading his thoughts.

"Yes, miss," he said, nervously. "You were sayin'——"

"I think you'll do," she said. "You're clean; that's an excellent sign. You're fond of horses; that's another. You look honest, though you can't trust looks always. I think you've been speakin' the truth. Yes, I believe what you've told me. I'm not surprised that you're out of work, of course!"

"I'm willin'," said Danny. "I've tried everything. I've tramped all over London. I'd just about given up hope when I saw Jack."

"What's your name?" asked the girl.

"Creath. Danny Creath."

"Mine's Roake. Kitty Roake."

She sat for a while in silence, tapping her fingers on the table. Then she said: "Why on earth did you come here, to this place?"

"The gate was open. I was lost."

The girl's face was very grave. "I see," she said. Then she rested her elbows on the table and propped her chin on her hands and studied him once more.

A STRANGE impatience took hold of Danny. There was something in life that he had missed. He did not know what. He was lonely and he was useless. He was afraid of the future. A vague longing for happiness and security possessed him.

And then, as he watched the girl and waited for her to speak, he understood. Girls had meant nothing, less than horses or dogs, and yet if he were never again to see this girl with the fair hair and the blue eyes and the little serious smile he would be the most miserable man alive.

"What work do you do when you have work?" she asked.

"I dunno anything much except horses," said Danny.

"But what did you do before the war?"

"Me, miss? I was a reg'lar!"

"Oh! Then what did you do before you joined the Army?"

"I had a job," said Danny. "A good job. I left of my own accord."

"Whereabouts? London?"

"No, miss. Swallick, in Sussex. I helped with the horses up at the Hall. An' then there was trouble about things bein' stolen; forage an' harness; an' they thought it was me! It wasn't. I was so angry at bein' suspected an' told if I owned up I'd be given another chance that I went straight to the old Colonel, Colonel Athryn his name was, an' said I'd keep on with my work till they cleared me or sent me to prison. Either way, I'd go. I wouldn't stop a minute longer than I need. The head groom was the thief. Soon as they found out he was guilty I quit. I walked out without gettin' my money, anything. I'd done with the whole crowd of them.

"A fine place, Swallick Hall, miss, all the same. Red brick an' white stone an' green shutters: an' lawns an' gardens: an' fine stables: an' all round were trees: an' you could see the downs from the front terrace. My folks had worked there way back for hundreds of years, so they said."

"What did you do after you left the Hall?"

"I pretty nigh starved. Then I joined the Artillery. An' when war come I went to Belgium with my Batt'ry an' my two horses, Jill an' Jack, as well matched a pair of browns as you'd find anywhere, an' the best wheelers in the Army. Sometimes Jill 'ud be ride horse an' Jack hand, an' then I'd change 'em about. I believe, miss, them two horses, Jack an' Jill, was as quick to spot the signals from the lead an' centre drivers as I was. You never saw neither of them layin' on to each other an' jammin' your leg when you were gallopin'. You never caught 'em trying to let the other four horses do all the work; they were well in the collar, always. No, miss, them two horses were just about perfect.

"Maybe I ought to have told you about the Major, miss. He joined the Batt'ry, as a second lieutenant, about a couple of weeks after Mons. An' who do you think he was? Young Mr. Athryn. The old Colonel's son. He was younger than me, of course, but we'd been friends always. It was me taught him to ride. An' he came to the Batt'ry an' saw me ridin' wheel of number one gun. Soon as he got a chance he had a talk with me. 'Well, Danny,' he ses—he called me that when there was no one by—'Well, Danny, so this is what you've been doin', eh? As soon as the war's over, an' you're out of the Army, you're comin' straight back to Swallick! We want you as head groom!' 'Beg your pardon, sir,' I ses, 'but I'd rather die!' That ended it. He was angry, I think, but he never said nothin' more about it, not till the day Jill was killed. I'm not tirin' you, miss, am I?"

"Why, no," said the girl. "Of course not. Was Jill killed?"

"It was in the push, miss, when the Batt'ry was advancin' over rough ground, hard as we could, an' Jerry was shellin' us. A coal-box landed just ahead of us an'

knocked out the number one an' the lead an' centre drivers an' their horses. They went down all in a heap, kickin' an' screamin', in a cloud of black smoke an' H.E. fumes, an' me an' Jack an' Jill came pilin' up on top of 'em, half stunned. Both of the two pair of spare horses we had was out of action, an' I knew if we wanted to get the gun up we'd have to do it ourselves.

"I slung myself out of the saddle, slipped the quick release traces, an' backed clear of the centres an' leaders. You never saw such a mess. Almost a direct hit, miss. An' then I was wounded myself, in the forehead an' chest.

"I mounted again somehow, an' the next thing I knew Jill an' Jack was off at a gallop, after the rest of the Batt'ry, with me holdin' on to Jack's mane, with the reins flyin' loose an' my feet out of the stirrups, just about ready to roll off, an' not able to see because of the blood. Miss, them two horses took that gun into action themselves, over shell holes an' old trenches an' broken wire, everything, under heavy fire, an' they wheeled into line an' halted in the right place, just like there'd been all six horses an' three drivers to guide 'em, instead of no one!

"An' then—why, then, soon as they stopped, there was a most awful crash overhead, H.E. shrapnel, miss, an' when I came to myself I was on the ground, starin' up at the sky, with Major Athryn bendin' over me. 'Danny,' he ses, 'that was dam' good work!' 'Not me, sir,' I ses, 'it was them two horses of mine.' An' then I saw Jack with a gash in his neck an' Jill by his side, dead. That just about finished me off.

"'Danny,' ses the Major, 'I can't stop now,' he ses, 'but I'll write an' say that you're goin' home again!' He ran off an' I ain't seen him since. I was in hospital in Blighty when I heard that I'd got the D.C.M. Jack an' Jill's D.C.M., really. They won it, not me. That's what I meant. You see, miss? An' now old Jack's cast from the Army, an' sold to someone who ought to be hanged. When I saw him to-day bein' taken down to the docks, I said to myself, miss, if they killed him because he was no use, they might as well kill me as well. I'm not much use either, miss. That's all. Maybe we ought to be movin' off now. We've got to go some time, anyway."

The girl had been staring into the red glow of the grate, leaning back in her chair, her hands folded in her lap. Now she turned to Danny, with her cheeks flushed and her eyes shining.

"How long are you going to go drifting round the way you've been doin'? You're too good to sink! An' you will sink, if you don't find something to do! An' where are you likely to find it in London? Mr. Creath, why don't you go home to that place in Sussex, and your Major? He wants you. You go!"

"No," said Danny. "I can't, miss. No, miss, I can't do it!"

"That means there's a girl. Danny Creath, go back to her an' tell her you're sorry, an' you'll never be stupid again!"

Danny gazed at her in amazement.

"There's no girl," he said.

The girl broke into a little laugh, as though something had pleased her.

"Well," she said, "go back, anyway. Go back to the Major, with your horse. It's your one hope." She rose to her feet.

"Go back. What good can you do here in London? Put your pride in your pocket an' be humble, or—or maybe the police will find you an' take you to prison! And the horse! You know what they'll do to the horse, don't you?"

"Miss," he began, "if they took Jack now——"

"Why, dad," said the girl, "what's brought you home this time of day?" Then she turned to Danny with a smile. "Dad, this is a friend of mine!"

She raised her hand quickly. She was looking at the window that opened on to the yard.

"Hush!"

A key had turned in the lock of the front door and a man with a heavy tread had come into the house.

The girl put her hand on Danny's shoulder.

"Wait!" she whispered. "You're not to be scared!"

The door opened and the police-sergeant with the short black moustache and the stern eyes entered the room.

Danny looked up, stunned and shaken. Hope left him.

"Why, dad!" said the girl. She flung her arms about the big sergeant and kissed him. "Why, dad, what's brought you home this time of day?" Then she put him away from her gently and turned to Danny with a smile. "Dad, this is a friend of mine!"

"A friend of yours," said the sergeant, staring at Danny from under his shaggy eyebrows. "Indeed! How are you, Mister—Mister——"

"Creath," said the girl. "Danny Creath, D.C.M., late Royal Horse Artillery—been having a bad time of it, too!"

But never such a bad time of it as at that minute, thought Danny. The big sergeant's manner puzzled him. He knew him surely! Then why didn't he tell him he was going to take him to the police-station? Why did he look at him as though he had never seen him before?

"Pleased to meet you, Mr. Creath," said the sergeant, gruffly. "Cold, isn't it? Kitty, I'll trouble you for a cup of coffee,

an' sharp. Can't stay a second. Not a second." He seated himself at the table and held out his hands to the fire. "Don't stand, Mr. Creath. Sit down, sit down—that's better!" In a daze, Danny had dropped once more into his chair and was waiting for what must come.

"You've not told us, dad, what's brought you home?"

"Haven't I?" said the sergeant. "Well, well!" He took the cup of coffee she gave him and smiled at her as he drank. "Good girl, Kitty; that's fine! I'll tell you what brought me home in just one minute!" He drank some more coffee and sighed deeply. "Ah, there's nothin' like coffee, is there?" He looked at Danny.

"No, nothin' like coffee," said Danny. "Nothin'."

"They were fightin' this afternoon down by St. Katherine's," said the sergeant. "What set 'em off was a man stealin' a horse!"

"A horse!" said the girl.

The sergeant nodded. "In broad daylight. Knocked down the drover an' the horse-dealer, an' made off with a horse, hard as he could. Yes, an' what's more——" The sergeant stopped and drained the rest of his coffee at one draught. "An' what's more, him an' his horse between 'em pretty near knocked out a policeman!"

"A policeman!" said the girl. "Did you get him—the man and the horse? Did you, dad?"

"Not yet," said the sergeant. "But we will. Bound to. He's not very far away, I know. They were sayin' down by the river that the thief was an old artilleryman, a driver—just like you, Mr. Creath—if you were a driver, of course!" The sergeant nodded at Danny. "An' he saw, this artilleryman did, his old horse—the horse that he'd ridden in France on its way to the docks to be shipped to Ghent to be killed. Queer, eh?"

"Yes," said Danny in a choked voice. "Yes, an'—an' he took back his horse, did he?"

"He did. An' he's safe, up to the present. We don't know how. Someone's hidin' him. I know how he feels about that horse of his. My boy was in the Artillery, too, Mr. Creath. He'd have done the same. Well, I've got to be goin'." He rose to his feet and buckled his belt. "They'll nab him, poor feller, any time now. The horse will give him away. Brown horse, white star on his forehead, two white socks on his forelegs. We'll have him before mornin', I bet." The sergeant put on his helmet and adjusted the chin-strap carefully. "If the man that stole that horse is wise, he'll do what old MacKie said the Scots Greys did in South Africa. Remember him tellin' us, Kitty? Well, I must go. Good coffee, that—better than tea any day!"

The girl went to him and kissed him on both cheeks.

"What's that for, eh?"

"Oh, nothin'!"

"Makin' fun of your old father, ain't you?" said the sergeant. "Well, good-bye, Mr. Creath, an' good luck to you!"

He crushed Danny's hand in his and walked heavily out of the room.

DIRECTLY the front door had closed with a bang, the girl turned on Danny almost fiercely.

"Quick! There's no time to lose."

Danny was troubled. "Miss, maybe I ought to tell you I've met your father before. He never knew me, but he was the policeman who was nearly knocked out by the horse—an' me!"

The girl laughed delightedly.

"Never knew you! Oh, Dan, you're wonderful! Never knew you! When he was telling you all the while to get away as quick as you could! You'll go home to that Major of yours, won't you?" She laid her hand on his arm. "You will, Dan, won't you? For my sake, as well as the horse's!"

Danny thrilled. Twice she had called him Dan!

"For your sake, miss?"

"Yes. An' for dad's, too. If you don't go, there'll be trouble for all of us! An' you'll lose the horse!"

"I understand," said Danny. "I'll go, of course. I'll try, anyway. The police will spot Jack, perhaps, but it can't be helped, can it?"

"Listen to me," said the girl. In one hand was the coffee-pot, in the other a china bowl which she took from the dresser. "Dad's got a friend, a Scotsman, a Mr. MacKie, who told me that in the South African war the Scots Greys dyed all their horses brown with coffee because of the Boers snipin'. See? Maybe it's not true, but that's what we're goin' to do. Dad was sizin' you up. He trusts you, an' so do I!" She poured the coffee into the bowl and added some hot water from the kettle. "Now—we're ready. We must make haste. Give me that coat of mine."

Danny followed her across the yard in the twilight to the stable under the arch.

Jack whinnied as they opened the door.

"Good boy!" said the girl. "Lonely, eh? Good ol' boy!"

By the light of a candle stuck in melted wax on the edge of the manger she dabbed the horse's white-starred forehead and the two white fetlocks with coffee.

"Kitty, I'll come back to you, an' I'll ask you what I don't dare ask you now."

"There," she said, presently, "that's done! Would you know him? Take off the horse rug an' we'll see!"

"Miss," said Danny, "I could take him anywhere!"

"You couldn't," said the girl. "Don't think it! How far would you get before some policeman stopped you, an', coffee or no coffee, found the white forehead an' socks? You mustn't ride an' you mustn't walk: you must drive! Get that harness down from the wall!"

Danny obeyed meekly.

Not till the horse was harnessed between the shafts of the two-wheeled cart did she speak again.

"Now," she said, "nobody'd dream of stoppin' you. You're safe! An' here!" She slipped off her man's coat. "Take this. Put it on. You'll be cold, drivin'."

"Miss," said Danny, "I can't!"

"You can!" said the girl, "an' you will! Put it on this minute. Don't you dare disobey orders!"

"But I can't go takin' things that don't belong to me, miss. I just can't."

"Don't be silly," said the girl. "There's nothin' to stop you bringin' 'em back some day. Is there?"

A fierce joy swept over Danny. Bring them back! Why, of course he would bring them back! And he would see the girl and would thank her for all she had done, and perhaps——

Then he felt frightened.

"Miss Roake," he said, "if it's not presumin' on too short an acquaintance, I'd like to ask you a question!"

"Go ahead!" said the girl. "What?"

Her smile encouraged him.

"Is there any hope, straight, now?"

Directly he had spoken he knew that he had said too much. But the girl was not angry. She looked at him curiously.

"Hope?" she said. "What do you mean, hope?"

Words choked him. He could not explain.

"You'd better be goin', I think," said the girl.

Danny led the horse to the gate and lifted the bar and pulled open the double doors.

A policeman approached from the direction of the railway arch. Danny's heart was pounding. He bent his head and adjusted a strap.

"Good ev'nin', Miss Kitty," said the policeman. "Fog's liftin' nicely."

"Good ev'nin'," said the girl. "Goin' to be a cold night, though, isn't it?"

The policeman strolled s'owly on, humming a little tune.

"You see," said the girl. "He never suspected, did he? An' he's one of the intelligent ones!"

Danny took the hand she held out to him and stood gazing into her face, not knowing quite what he should say to her.

She laughed shyly.

"Well, Dan, you'll know me the next time you see me, won't you?"

He drew a deep breath of relief. A weight had lifted from his mind.

"I don't know how to thank you," he said. "I can't. You've saved a couple of down-an'-outs: me an' Jack! We're lucky, the pair of us. But that's only the beginnin'!"

He stopped then, and climbed into the cart.

"Wait a minute," said the girl. Her cheeks were pink once again, and there was a light in her eyes that made him feel clumsy and stupid. "What did you mean by askin' me was there any hope? Maybe there is, Dan, if you mean what I mean!"

He laughed happily, sure of the future.

"Kitty," he said, 'you've called me Dan three—no, four times. That's hope enough for any man! I can't say no more now, Kitty. I must go before it's too late. It's not me that I'm worryin' about, but Jack. You see how it is, don't you? Jack stood by the Batt'ry! It's up to the Batt'ry or what's left of it, to stand by Jack! I'll take him down into Sussex an' I'll go to the Major an' tell him everything! An' then, Kitty, I'll come back to you, an' I'll ask you what I don't dare ask you now. Gee up, Jack—we're goin' home!"

At the railway arch he looked back.

The girl, still standing by the open gateway, waved her hand to him.

ACROSTICS.

TRIPLE ACROSTIC No. 115.

(The Third of the Series.)

THE primals, centrals, finals indicate
The formal style of him who leads the state.

1. Question and answer orderly expressed;
   Reject what's one half cant, and keep the rest.
2. Formless and dark, yet light may be descried
   Between the sea-like sounds on either side.
3. Ascribed to daylight, to democracy,
   To franchise, frontiers, and bureaucracy.
4. A scientific form of nutritive,
   Stripped of externals, will the answer give.
5. For these the cargo of the homeward-bound;
   Bearing the fore-part, bearers oft are found.
6. The miller and his men may toil and strain,
   But without this their labour is in vain.
7. An English shire with an historic name,
   Though to be county it can scarcely claim.
8. In order to make books he needs must roam,
   Or he may book his orders nearer home.

EDI.

Answers to Acrostic No. 115 should be addressed to the Acrostic Editor, THE STRAND MAGAZINE, Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C.2, and must arrive not later than by the first post on February 9th.

To every light one alternative answer may be sent; it should be written at the side. At the foot of his answer every solver should write his pseudonym and nothing else.

ANSWER TO DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 114.

1.	T	undr	A
2.	O	pa	L
3.	B	alti	C
4.	A	montillad	O
5.	C	orint	H
6.	C	olens	O
7.	O	va	L

Lowell is not the only writer who has written about Rhoecus, the hero of the third light of No. 112; Landor gives the story, and it is also found in two or three of the Greek writers. All possible variants of the name are admitted. Rhoetus, in Ovid's Metamorphoses, although a Rhoecus, can not be accepted; he was a different person.

Longfellow's poem on the Songo River is in the Fourth Flight of "Birds of Passage."

THE TWENTY-FIRST SERIES.

These four acrostics were not hard enough; they were all answered correctly by Acera, Anvil, Beehive, Beggar, Bobundara, Caliban, Cimwin, Castor, Cobweb, Corisande, Crotel, Diggy, Flapper, Franz, Junius, Kern, Lemerle, Lemma, Lilcat, Lobo, Macray, Manora, Cmeleg, Ph., Puss, Reg, Rewop, Sachs, Salut, Sant, Sey, Silex, Sivart, Sloes, Somerford, Splosh, Ubique, Vayu, Vinjo, Wem, Whimbush, Wynell, Yelnats, Yoko, and Zenas. Cobweb is not eligible for a prize this time, and the other forty-four solvers must attempt an extra acrostic, which should decide the destination of the prizes.

For this acrostic only one answer may be sent to each light, solutions must arrive not later than Feb. 9th, and competitors must be careful to give their names and addresses as well as their pseudonyms.

EXTRA ACROSTIC.

HE who from Oxford down to Windsor rows
Assuredly through both these places goes.

1. Take words suggesting rabbits, eggs, and cheese;
   One little word will rhyme with all of these.
2. Farewell! the word repeated we may see
   In English laureate's wondrous elegy.
3. Prithee, what can such "trumpet now" portend?
   "Breathe free—it is an enemy, no friend!"
4. A bird one letter lacking is espied
   In island's two names written side by side.
5. Mother and uncle take, please mix them well:
   What the resulting creatures did now tell.
6. 'Tis sixty years since, and some reckoning
   Will bring to light the fact that George was king.

PAN.

THE PROPHETIC CAMERA

by

L. De GIBERNE SIEVEKING

ILLUSTRATED BY FRANK GILLETT R.I.

THERE were moments in the life of Mr. Muffle when he was glad his wife was not present. She constantly upbraided him for being a "soft-hearted fool."

"We may as well put the shutters up at once," said she, "if every time I leave you alone in the shop you empty the till into the lap of the first person who brings in a piece of good-for-nothing rubbish." But then she was made of harder stuff than he was. On this particular evening he was particularly glad that she had gone off to a sale at Islington and would not be back for some time.

He was too distressed at the appearance of the miserable individual who furtively crept up to the counter to appraise with a businesslike eye the thing which the other set down before him. The miserable-looking man fumbled with one hand on the counter, and said :—

"What will you allqw me on this ?"

Mr. Muffle picked up the large old box-camera and turned it over once or twice.

"What do you want for it ?" he asked.

"What'll you 'llow me ?" persisted the other, almost inaudibly.

"Three-and-six," with a shrug of his shoulders, though he felt sure the camera was worth practically nothing.

"Make it five bob."

Mr. Muffle looked from the camera to its owner. He shook his head. The other's face fell.

"'Tisn't really worth half a crown, by rights," murmured Mr. Muffle, thinking of his wife's return that evening.

"It's worth a good deal more than that.

indeed it is," said the other. "Why, the lens alone——"

Mr. Muffle moved about uneasily and glanced at the clock.

"All right," he said, suddenly, and went to his desk to make out the pawnticket. In another moment the man had gone, and with him went five shillings which would be very hard to account for.

Luckily Mrs. Muffle was in a good humour when she returned, having bought some old china and glass very cheaply, and merely snorted with a contemptuous little laugh when she saw the camera, and pushed it out of the way among a lot of unsaleable uniforms that had come from men home from South Africa.

THAT had been in November. Now it was spring again. The Euston Road was drying up under the hard bright rays of the early May sunlight. Mr. Muffle was standing in the doorway of his shop reading a leading article on Campbell-Bannerman in the *Daily News*. He turned when a voice from behind him called his name. His little nephew, who was staying with them, caught hold of his arm.

"Oh, uncle!" he said, "I shall be going to-morrow, and I forgot to tell you that father made me promise to be sure and not forget to bring back a photo of you and Aunt Mabel."

"Why, Charlie," said his uncle, "me and your aunt ain't had our picture took for nigh on eight years. Your father has seen all those old things."

"Ain't you got a camera?" asked the boy. "Then I could just take a snap in no time."

"Never 'ad a camera in me life," replied his uncle, peering under his hand at the clock on St. Pancras tower.

"What's that?" said his wife's voice from the gloom behind the counter. "Have you forgotten that thing you lent five good shillings of my money for last year? Might as well say 'gave,' for all the chance there is of him ever coming back for it!"

"There you are, Uncle Robin!" cried the boy. "Let's have a look at it."

Mrs. Muffle, muttering to herself, got upon a chair and reached into a dusty corner. Then she returned to the counter and banged the old camera down on it.

"Look out, aunt! You'll smash the works." Charlie picked it up and carried it out into the light. After blowing the dust off it he had soon pressed the knob which opened the back.

"It'll take quarter-plate," he announced, cheerfully. And then, pressing the bulb, he looked through the lens at the sky.

"Looks all right," he said. "Come on, Uncle Robin, give me a bob and I'll go and buy a packet of plates at the chemist's opposite."

"Making six good shillings in all thrown away," observed his aunt, sourly.

Five minutes later Charlie was in the cupboard under the counter, carefully sliding the plates into their sockets as well as he could in the dark. Soon he emerged, radiant but rumpled, and ordered his aunt and uncle out into the street. He made them stand together just beneath the three golden balls.

"Put your arm round my neck, Mabel," said Mr. Muffle, with an effort at jocularity, "and pretend we're on our 'oneymoon."

"You button up your coat," said his wife, severely, "and smooth your 'air a bit. Then you might look more like a man and less like a cab 'orse."

Poor Mr. Muffle wore a very chastened expression as his nephew pressed the bulb of the old camera.

"Now," said Charlie, as he pulled the knob and dropped the first plate, "now you take one of me. Me and Aunt Mabel together." So saying, he handed his uncle the camera and stood beside his aunt with a perky, self-conscious air.

Mr. Muffle pressed the bulb.

"Now I'll take one of the Euston Road," said he, as a happy thought struck him. "I've often thought I'd like one took just from this very door. But 'ow do you shift the plates?"

His nephew showed him, and they shook the second plate down. He looked through the view-finder and saw a little man talking to a policeman in the near foreground, a hansom cab bowling along towards him, and two horse buses drawn up on the farther side of the street. The advertisement on the side of the nearer bus caught his eye :—

"HENRY IRVING IN 'OTHELLO.'"

He pressed the bulb once again, and, turning to the others :—

"But who's a-going to develop them?" he asked.

"The chemist over the way," replied his nephew. "I asked him."

"What'll *that* cost?" demanded his aunt, sharply.

"Ooo, not much."

Next morning, after breakfast, Charlie went across to the chemist, and returned in a few moments running.

"Look here!" he said, bursting into the parlour. "This *is* a go! It is a funny camera and no mistake. They've come out all wrong. It's took something altogether different!"

"What do you mean?" said his uncle,

stretching out a buttery thumb and forefinger. He looked closely at the print for a few moments, and then he jumped up with an exclamation, and, pushing the boy aside, he gazed incredulously at the other two photographs on the table.

"Aunt Mabel!" cried Charlie up the stair. "Aunt Mabel, come quickly. The photos have come out mighty queer. You haven't come out at all! And uncle——"

Soon all three of them were staring in blank amazement. In the first photograph Mr. Muffle was standing against the shop by himself. On his face a placid, comfortable expression which looked completely unfamiliar to him. He had filled out, apparently, and though he looked perfectly well and happy, and very much better dressed, he seemed to have aged considerably. The cut of his coat and the style of his collar and tie struck them as particularly odd. The name over the shop, above his head, was no longer R. Muffle, but E. Watson. Also the three golden balls were no longer to be seen. The second photograph was that of a young man of about twenty-eight, in overalls, with a large spanner in one hand.

"Why! It's you, Charlie!"

"Can't be me. And yet it *do* seem to be like me some'ow." And then: "I say!" in an awestruck tone, "he's lost two fingers off his left hand."

Of the third photograph they could make neither head nor tail at first. It appeared to be of a wide, straight thoroughfare completely unknown to them. There were a large number of odd-looking, small, square vehicles, unlike anything they had ever seen before. In the near foreground was a police inspector talking to a man in a bath-chair. On the opposite side of the street there were two omnibuses without horses, on whose sides was an advertisement which stood out in clear letters:—

"BEERBOHM TREE
IN 'JULIUS CÆSAR.'"

"Them things," said Mr. Muffle, in a bewildered voice, "looks like motor-cars, but I'm sure I never seed one that shape before! And what a lot of them! Buses, too."

"There's the corner of St. Pancras!" cried his wife, pointing her finger at it. "But whatever's that huge building opposite to it? I never saw *that* before."

"It's the Euston Road," said Charlie.

"Where's that camera?"

Charlie produced it.

Mr. Muffle took it gingerly over to the window of the parlour. Suddenly he gave a little gasp. On the side of the camera was a circle of metal like a clock-face, about two inches in diameter. So discoloured was it that it was hardly distinguishable from the faded leather round it. He rubbed it briskly with his sleeve. The other two crowded round him.

"Whatever are all those figures?" said Charlie. "And look, there's a little arrow pointing. You can move it round with your finger."

Mr. Muffle did so.

"I wonder what it's for?" he said.

Charlie's face glowed suddenly with inspiration.

"Where was the arrow? What figure was the arrow against when we took the photos?" he asked, in a hushed voice.

"Fourteen, I think," said his uncle. And then: "Yes, fourteen."

"Fourteen *years!*" said Charlie.

"What do you mean—years?" said his aunt, quickly. "And why didn't I come out in the photos, anyway?"

Something dawned on Mr. Muffle.

"Because you're——" said he, and stopped.

There was a long pause. And then she said, looking at the photograph of her husband:—

"But you look so well—and happy—Robin."

THERE was a step at the door. Charlie turned and saw the chemist from across the road. He was a cheerful-looking man about thirty-five, with a pale moustache.

"Mind if I have another look at those photos I developed?" he asked.

The others said nothing. For a long time he scrutinized the photograph of the Euston Road. Then he picked up the camera and, opening it, he put his hand inside and felt about.

"This arrow in the disc of figures doesn't seem to be connected with anything. Nothing comes through from outside," he said, at last.

"It's *impossible*," said Mr. Muffle, with an air of finality.

"Nothing is impossible," said the chemist.

"Well, you developed them," said Mrs. Muffle, accusingly.

"But I didn't take them," said the chemist. "And what I want you to let me do is to make a few experiments myself. Now I'll go across to my place and load the camera up full of new plates, and then we'll take six photographs, turning the arrow on five figures each time. Ten—fifteen—twenty——"

"Thirty years," murmured Mrs. Muffle to herself. "I don't believe it. I *won't*

believe it! To think you paid five shillings for this—this——"

The chemist returned almost at once with the camera in his hand.

"Come out in the street," he said, in an excited voice.

Charlie eyed him open-mouthed. Handing the camera to Mr. Muffle, the chemist said:—

"Now you take six photos of me, and turn the arrow to five the first time, ten the next time, and so on."

"Aren't you afraid?" said Mrs. Muffle.

"Not me!" said the chemist, stuffing his hands into his trouser pockets. But for all that his face was pale.

With a trembling hand Mr. Muffle prepared to do as he was asked. But his nephew took the camera from him, saying:—

"You can't do it like that, uncle, you're shaking so."

After peering once quickly through the view-finder, Charlie pressed the bulb six times, dropping a plate and turning the arrow on five points between each.

"Right," said the chemist, taking the camera from him. "I sha'n't be long."

"Isn't there room for us in your dark-room?" asked Mr. Muffle, eagerly.

"I say! Yes, *is* there?" chimed in Charlie.

"Come along," said the chemist, and they crossed the road.

"I am sure it can't be right, and I don't believe it, anyway," muttered Mrs. Muffle, turning back into the shop.

However, she was unable to think of anything else. In about a quarter of an hour she locked the front door and followed them across the road to the chemist's shop.

"Where are you?" She raised her voice slightly.

Following the sound of talking which she heard, she went through into the back of the shop. She came to a door which was shut. From the other side of this came the chemist's voice.

"And now the last one," he said, and his voice was full of emotion.

She waited in silence.

Then she heard Charlie say, "It's coming out. You're not there!"

For a long time there was only the sound of the plate clicking against the side of the dish as the chemist tilted it.

"Yes, you *are* there; you're sitting down."

"Hooray!" shouted the chemist. "I'm sixty-five! And don't I look prosperous just?"

The door opened.

"They're fixing," he said, on seeing Mrs. Muffle. "I'll show you them in a moment."

"Then it *is* true," she said, quietly.

Soon they were all looking at the wet plates as the chemist held them up for a minute to the light before dropping them into clean water. Each one showed him slightly older, and in the third the name over the Muffles' shop had changed to Watson, and the three golden balls had gone. The window was full of books.

"I'm fifty there," said the chemist.

"What I want to know," said Mr. Muffle, "is what I'm doing then, if a chap called Watson has got the shop. Oh, by the way, though, I'm fifty-four then. But however did I come to look so rich?"

"It won't be your own doing, you may be sure," said his wife.

The chemist held up the last three one by one.

"And see," he said at the last one, "I'm sixty-five there. I've a good mind to take another six."

"Which would be tempting Providence," said Mrs. Muffle.

"Tempting your grandmother!" he responded cheerfully. "That would only bring me to ninety-four."

"Take a dozen," suggested Charlie, facetiously.

"You're a Noptimist!" laughed the chemist.

THAT day in the parlour behind the Muffles' shop the four of them could think and talk of nothing else. The chemist was full of tremendous suggestions. At first he was all for advertising the camera's capabilities, and charging so much a head to show people in black-and-white exactly what their fate would be. And then, on second thoughts, he came to the conclusion that it would be better to continue the experiments for a while. For, as Mr. Muffle pointed out, the camera did not really belong to them. The chemist replied that, if ever the owner returned to redeem it, they might buy it from him. No sum appeared to him too large for this purpose.

"Of course, telling people the future—— Well, we can't do it," reflected the chemist.

"That's exactly what we *can* do," said Mr. Muffle.

"No; I mean it's illegal."

And then he went off on the most fantastic flights of imagination.

"We could take photographs of places centuries and centuries ahead, and see exactly what's going to happen. What kind of buildings—architecture—feats of engineering—means of transport—people's clothes. Why," he cried, "we could take a photo of the end of the world!"

"Don't be blasphemous," said Mrs Muffle. "It would go off bang as a judg-

ment, if you did. Besides, what's all this 'we'? It isn't your camera, as I know of."

"Well, it isn't ours either," interpolated Mr. Muffle.

The chemist judiciously passed this point over.

"It's queer," he went on. "The camera shows us what we're going to become——"

"Of course, the camera cannot lie," snorted Mrs. Muffle, in parentheses.

Something dawned on Mr. Muffle. "Because you're——" said he, and stopped.

"And perhaps," continued the chemist, "the camera is going to be the means by which we achieve fortune. When we've formed the company—Prophecies, Limited; or Forewarned Fore-armed Trust."

"Second Sight Syndicate!" cried Mr. Muffle, fired by the other's enthusiasm.

The chemist got up and strode about the room.

"By a series of photographs taken according to a calculated time and place we shall be able to foretell social changes, evolutions, revolutions, falls of Governments, wars and their results. Can't you see a series of photographs taken in the House of Commons, showing who'll be sitting on what benches ten, twenty, forty years hence? How prices alter from the effect of war! By photographing shop windows with ticketed objects. If the prices on the tickets come out double—treble what they are at present, we shall know that once again England has won a war! We shall be able to go to Prime Ministers and charge them fabulous sums for photographs of the House of Commons Register three years hence."

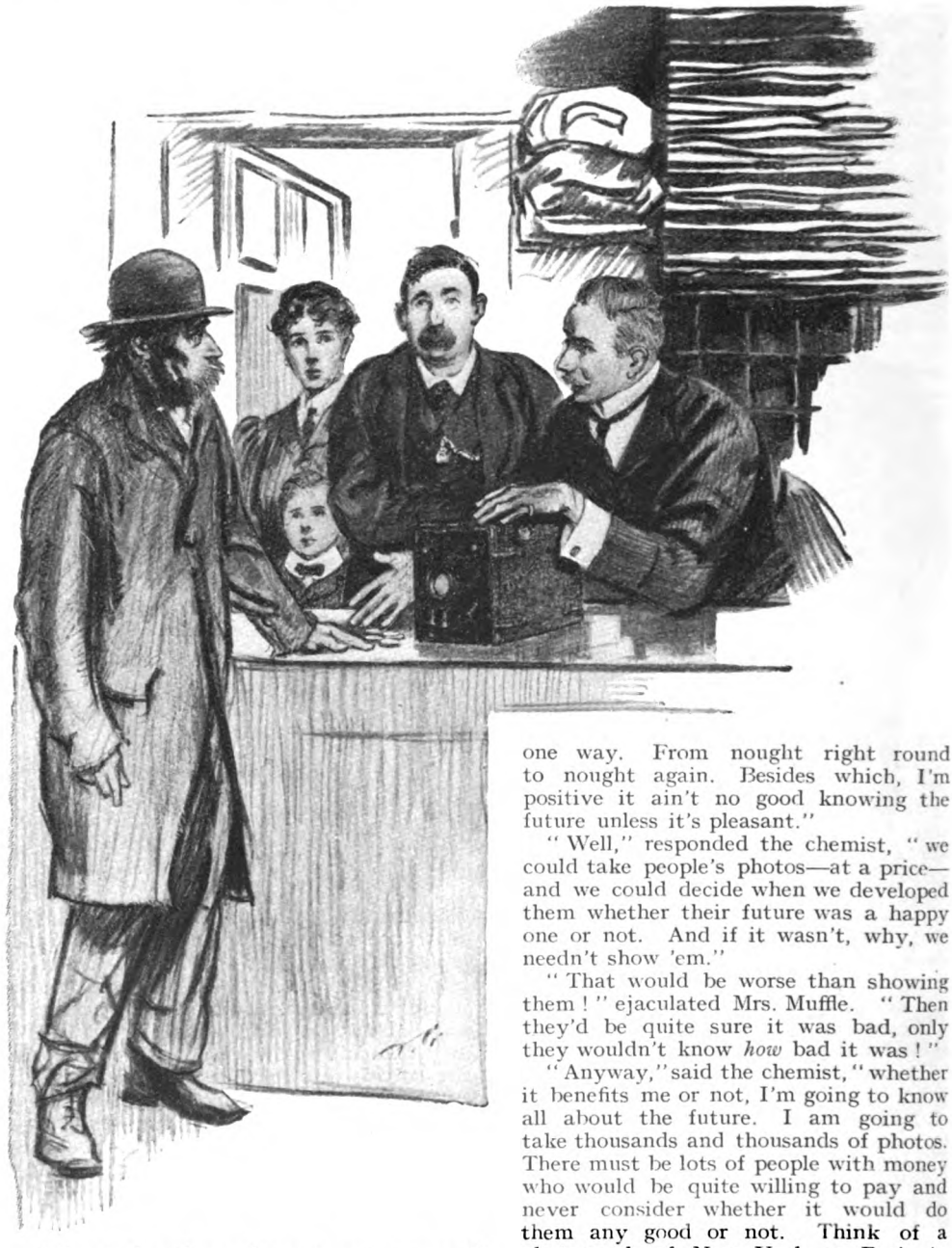
Mr. Muffle objected.

"What would be the good," he reasoned, "of showing anybody anything? We might show one man how he would die by the hangman's rope, but that wouldn't enable him to avoid it. If it did, the photo wouldn't be true. It would be merely a suggestion as to what might happen. We might demonstrate to any number of people the actual, precise, and detailed result of a revolution that was inevitably going to take place. Famine—waste—disease—rioting. But in so much as it was inevitable, it would 'ave to 'appen, and I'm sure nobody would be any better for the knowing of it. The politicians could change their way of going on as much as they pleased, but if what the camera said was going to 'appen *was* going to 'appen, what they did would be what they would have done in any case."

The chemist waved him to silence with an exasperated sweep of the arm.

"As if those were the only possibilities," he said. "Think how we might get the whole history of the world, backwards and forwards from beginning to end!"

"The arrow won't go backwards," said Mr. Muffle. "You can only push it round one way. From nought right round to nought again. Besides which, I'm positive it ain't no good knowing the future unless it's pleasant."



"I've took rather a fancy to your camera," he said to the miserable-looking individual. "What would you say to five pounds?"

"Well," responded the chemist, "we could take people's photos—at a price—and we could decide when we developed them whether their future was a happy one or not. And if it wasn't, why, we needn't show 'em."

"That would be worse than showing them!" ejaculated Mrs. Muffle. "Then they'd be quite sure it was bad, only they wouldn't know *how* bad it was!"

"Anyway," said the chemist, "whether it benefits me or not, I'm going to know all about the future. I am going to take thousands and thousands of photos. There must be lots of people with money who would be quite willing to pay and never consider whether it would do them any good or not. Think of a photograph of New York or Paris in the year 3000! Perhaps the Channel with bridges across it—flying machines as big as liners—a new kind of animal—

or even of the Euston Road in five hundred years' time! Why, man! Only think——"

The shop bell rang.

"Run and see what they want, Charlie," said his aunt.

Charlie returned with a pawnticket and handed it to his uncle.

Muttering that he would not be a moment, Mr. Muffle went into the shop. In answer to an excited shout, the three of them followed him a moment later.

"It's HIM! It's HIM!" said Mr. Muffle, clutching the chemist's arm.

The chemist pulled himself together.

"I've took rather a fancy to your camera," he said to the miserable-looking individual. "How'd you like to sell it me for a reasonable price?"

"I don't want to sell it," replied the other, in a sad voice.

"Well," said the chemist, a little breathlessly, "what would you say to five pounds? Come, now!"

"I don't want to sell it," repeated the other.

"Wouldn't you sell it—reelly—not at all?" urged Mr. Muffle, leaning over the counter with his hands clasped and his eyes shining.

"You've got my ticket," said the sad-looking man, "and here's the money. Give me the camera."

"He's perfectly right," said Mrs. Muffle, in a firm voice, and she handed him the camera.

"You shut your mouth!" said the chemist. And then to Mr. Muffle: "We can't—we *mustn't* let it go! We must make him a partner or something. We must hire it. Look here," he continued, turning to the stranger, "do you know what that camera of yours will do?"

The sad-looking man turned towards them with his hand on the door.

"If you've been using it," he said, quietly, "well, you've been using it, that's all. Good afternoon."

He stepped out into the street.

The offer of some vast sum framed itself on Mr. Muffle's silent lips. For a moment they gazed at each other motionless. Then Mrs. Muffle picked up the money and put it in the till. Suddenly the chemist was galvanized into action.

"I must follow him!" he shouted, and rushed to the door.

He looked wildly up and down the Euston Road, where the heavy afternoon traffic was rumbling by.

But the sad-faced man had disappeared.

NEXT MONTH:

"The Adventure of the Creeping Man,"

A NEW SHERLOCK HOLMES STORY,

By A. CONAN DOYLE.

MORE VARIATIONS on a personal theme

by

SIR LANDON RONALD

III.—MUSICAL PRODIGIES I HAVE KNOWN.

THERE is a firm belief amongst members of the public that no musical prodigy can ever develop into a serious or a great artiste. My experience has been exactly the contrary. To quote two examples that occur to me at once—both Josef Hofmann and Mischa Elman made their first bow to a public before they had reached their teens, and Hofmann is recognized to-day as one of the greatest pianists of all time, and Mischa Elman as a violinist is equally famous. I must be about the same age as Hofmann. At all events, I can still remember being taken by my mother to one of the Saturday "Pops" when I was about twelve years old for the purpose of hearing the "wunderkind" Josef Hofmann. My recollection of his actual playing, however, is not very vivid; but undoubtedly I had a boyish jealousy of his talent, and I am quite certain that my dear mother shared that jealousy. I remember her shrugging her shoulders and assuring me that she saw nothing marvellous in the boy, and that she was quite sure I could do just as well. I was equally sure I couldn't, and was annoyed with Hofmann and annoyed with myself and angry with my mother! A few days after I was introduced to the boy, but there was no bond of sympathy between us, and it wasn't till a year or so ago that we met again, when all the impressions of those far-away days were obliterated.

It was about six months after Hofmann had created a furore as a prodigy that another one loomed on the horizon. This was Otto Hegner, a German boy, extremely good-looking, with infinitely charming manners and a most sympathetic personality. I am speaking of nearly forty years ago, and yet in my mind's eye I can see the little chap, wearing a black velvet suit and lace collar, making his bow at the Steinway Hall and playing the pianoforte really beautifully. We became fast friends and had much in common. I believe in after years he developed into an excellent musician, but I remember reading of his death at the early age of forty a few years ago.

Some years elapsed before the musical profession and music-loving public were to be electrified by the appearance of a little boy violinist, aged nine, named Franz von Vecsey. This occurred in May, 1904, and he immediately became the rage of London. Of course, all sorts of rumours were spread to the effect that he was hypnotized, that when he played he wore "a drawn, pinched look" which made him appear to be forty years of age, and that he was ill-treated and made to practise all day and night. These rumours were absolutely false. I got to know the boy intimately, and found him, apart from his work, a regular "tomboy." He was undoubtedly a genius and had a facility for the violin that up to that time had never been equalled. Oddly enough, his successful appearance seemed to create a supply—not necessarily a demand—for prodigies of all sorts. One or two were quite outstanding and have developed into great artistes. I refer specially to May Harrison, the violinist who came on the scene about this time and whose great talent was then widely recognized, but whose public appearances in this country nowadays are far too few to satisfy her very large circle of admirers. The same season brought forth another boy violinist, Florizel von Reuter by name,

who never quite caught the public's approval, though I believe he has since become a successful artiste in America. Then, of course, there was that youthful phenomenon Jean Gerardy, the 'cellist, who was a really great artiste at the age of nine, and in my opinion actually reached his top form when he was fourteen years old! Certain it is that I personally never heard him play so well afterwards, and I used to hear him often when he grew into manhood. On the whole, however, it may truly be said that none of these youngsters was anything like the attraction that Franz von Vecsey proved to be. For months he played to crowded houses in all parts of the British Empire. And then occurred one of those sudden and complete falls which have been known to arrive to many of the mighty. A young, stalwart, thick-set boy appeared on the scene named Mischa Elman, and was immediately acclaimed not only as a rival of little Franz, but by many was considered in every way an infinitely greater artiste. The result was that Franz retired gracefully from the scene, and although I don't think he has ever appeared here since those days, I have heard that he has made a big position for himself abroad.

Those who were present at Mischa Elman's *début* at the large Queen's Hall will not readily forget it. It was at a concert given by a Mr. Williams, who engaged the newly formed London Symphony Orchestra for a few Symphony Concerts which he himself conducted. How he got hold of Mischa Elman I never learned, but it was probably through Daniel Mayer, a famous concert agent of that period, and it was this gentleman who promptly brought Mischa to me after his initial success. There was only a sparse audience, and I forget whether it was the Beethoven or the Brahms Concerto which Mischa had arranged to play, but I am sure it was one or the other. All the wiseacres shook their heads, and opinions were freely expressed by the critics that it was a pity that mere children should be allowed to play such great masterpieces, which could only be understood and interpreted by artistes of great experience. This was before the concert. At the end of the first movement, played by this mere boy with a depth and an understanding to which Joachim and Ysaye had accustomed us, we looked at one another and wondered whether we were in our senses! When the Concerto was finished everyone realized that a boy-violinist-genius had arisen whose equal had never been known up to that period. But it would be false to say that he immediately jumped into fame. The boy was no showman; he had no tricks or mannerisms; and his success, although assured, was undoubtedly on the slow side. With such genius he was bound "to arrive" eventually, and of course did so. In America he became a furore, and still remains one of the prime favourites over there, earning fabulous sums from concerts and gramophone records alike. His artistry is fully recognized in this country, but whether his "drawing" powers are great I am unable to state. They ought to be, because there are few, if any, actually greater fiddlers before the public than Mischa Elman.

Josef Hofmann

I have now dealt with most of the outstanding "prodigies" with whom I have come in contact during the past thirty or forty years, excepting one, and I have purposely kept him to the last, as he was one of those inexplicable phenomena which make me seriously wish to believe in the theory of the transmigration of the soul. His name

was Willy Ferraro, and he was the son of an Italian clown. His age was six when he was brought to me a few years ago, and I was told he was a conductor. I will tell the tale quite impartially and leave it to my readers to form their own opinion.

I granted an appointment to a Mr. X., who had written asking for an interview on an important matter of business. His story seemed a curious one to me at the time, and although it was obvious that his enthusiasm was perfectly sincere and genuine, I was in no wise convinced that he was correct in his statements. He informed me that he had just returned from Moscow and St. Petersburg (as it was called then), and that he had heard and seen there the marvel of the age, who had completely captured the Russian public. The phenomenon turned out to be a little boy of six who had conducted the greatest Symphony Orchestras in both cities before crowded audiences, and had been acclaimed by critics and musicians alike one of the greatest conductors of the day. I couldn't help smiling. Mr. X. assured me that, although a business man himself, he had devoted all his spare time to music, that his knowledge of the art was extensive, and that nobody was more sceptical than he was before he actually saw with his own eyes that all he had been told was absolute truth. I listened to this as patiently as I could and asked him in what way it concerned me. In a voice teeming with emotion he replied that it was his intention to bring this little genius to London, notwithstanding that he had never dabbled in that kind of speculation in his life; that he intended taking the Royal Albert Hall for at least six concerts, and that he implored and begged my interest and my help. Further, he asked my permission to engage the Royal Albert Hall Orchestra for these concerts. I demurred and told him quite honestly that, as far as I knew, no great British orchestra would consent to be conducted by an infant of six! This brought forth another outburst of enthusiasm — and eventually an almost tearful appeal not to be prejudiced or narrow-minded persuaded me to promise that I would approach the secretary of my orchestra and place the facts before him. This I did, with the result that the engagement was duly booked on the condition that I should attend the rehearsals, in case anything unpleasant occurred, and incidentally that I might translate from French into English any remarks the little fellow had to make. (It is a point worth noting that the boy, although only six years old, spoke French fluently notwithstanding he was Italian born.)

I shall never forget my first meeting with him. He came into my room and stood exactly as high as my writing-desk. He had glowing black eyes and a mass of black hair—an extraordinarily sensitive, mobile countenance. Every word he uttered was accompanied by an expressive gesture. He was astonishingly dignified, and his whole bearing was absurdly authoritative considering his stature and his age. This disappeared after about ten minutes, when I had joked with him and appealed to his sense of humour, which was exceptionally highly developed. We spoke no word of music, but we parted the greatest of friends, and I returned home to my wife with my heart completely lost!

Mischa Elman.

Conductor or no conductor, he was an angelic boy of infinite personality and infinite charm. Still, when I found myself at the Albert Hall early the next morning, and saw my staid and severe orchestra gradually taking their accustomed places, and the leader—that splendid artiste the late John Saunders—who came up to me and said, "What have you let us in for?" my courage began to fail and I could only give him an encouraging smile by way of reply and say: "Oh, well, we can always break the contract and retire." Instead of the customary desk for the conductor, a large dais had been erected in its place, upon which the little mite was to stand.

Franz von Vecsey.

As the time approached for the rehearsal, when, of course, I was expected to introduce little Willy to the orchestra, my heart went into my boots and I wanted to make a bolt for the nearest exit! But with an indescribable charm the little fellow came and kissed me on both cheeks, took my hand, and asked me to lead him on. He was as agile as a monkey, and climbed up to the top of the dais, baton in hand, and before I knew where I was I found myself talking to the orchestra, asking them to pay the mite standing before them the same attention as they would pay to myself. I noticed a smile of good-natured forbearance on the face of every member, but they were as surprised as I was when I translated to them a couple of charming sentences which the boy addressed to them without any hesitation whatsoever. Then I quitted the platform and with the greatest trepidation took a seat in the vast empty Albert Hall. The boy's mother and father and Mr. and Mrs. X. were the only people present in addition to myself.

The work chosen by the boy was the Overture to "The Mastersingers," and in a sense I was thankful for this, because I knew that my orchestra could scarcely go wrong in such a familiar work. I need not have worried. The amazing little fellow lifted his baton, and before two minutes had elapsed both I and the orchestra felt that here was somebody directing them who was in every sense a master! No cue for the entry of an instrument was missed, the *tempo* was exactly correct, and the beat was clear and definite, without any show but with infinite grace. What did it all mean? I *had* to believe my own eyes. I had not been hypnotized; I had not partaken of a first-class dinner with plenty of champagnes and liqueurs; above all, nobody could deceive me about the actual *technique* of conducting. And here was perfect technique, an intimate knowledge of the full score, and a perfectly-balanced, broad reading of a great and a familiar overture emanating from a child of six. The entire orchestra felt it and grasped it as quickly as I did, standing up at the end of the work and applauding the little fellow, who, with the greatest dignity, bowed his acknowledgments and signed to them to stop.

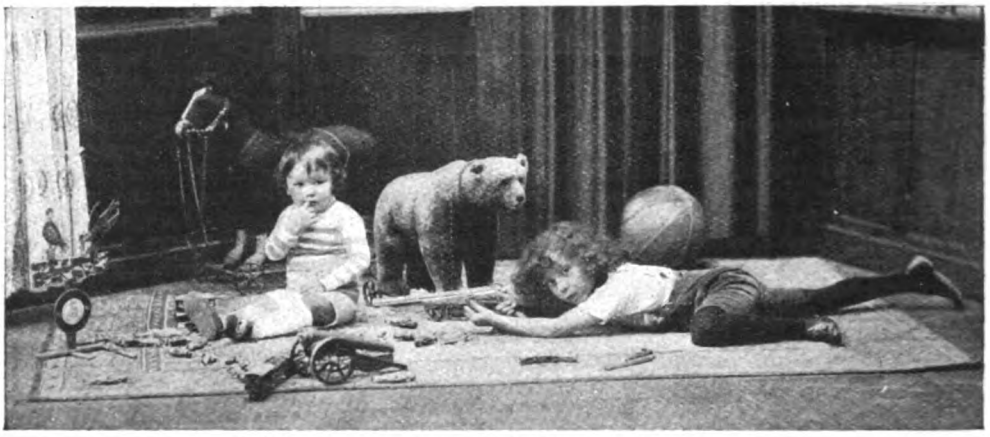
It is unnecessary for me to recount what occurred during the rest of the rehearsal. The second Symphony of Beethoven was also among the items in the programme, and this was duly rehearsed by the little fellow, as were all the other pieces—*without a note of music before him!* All there was left for me to do at the end of the rehearsal was to shake Mr. X. by the hand, admit that he was right in everything he had said, and get into the fresh air as quickly as ever I could. As a matter of fact, I longed to hold my head under a cold-water tap! Somehow I did not like to tell people about it. It all seemed so ridiculous and impossible. But there it was. It had actually happened and I had been present and seen it with my own eyes. I wondered what the rest of the world would think. Mr. X. had invited one or two hundred well-known people to a private hearing at the Albert Hall the same afternoon—it was a sort of "At Home." One or two short orchestral items and then some refreshments. I admit that astonishment was expressed on all sides, but as only one person in a hundred really understands anything about the art of conducting, the opinions expressed were valueless. Many came to me and said such things as: "Smart little chap, isn't he?" "I suppose there's a trick in it somewhere." "It seems, Ronald, that you've got to look to your laurels," or more often, "My dear Ronald, aren't you playing the game low down?" And what could I reply? The orchestra and I knew there was no trickery, but I knew equally well that the whole thing was unaccountable.

But I had still ruder shocks to come.

After the first concert was over—the Hall had been sparsely filled and the criticisms but lukewarm—I had the little fellow up to my house. I wanted to find out what he knew about music—whether he could play the piano, and how well he could read a full score and what his general knowledge of music was like. Imagine my utter amazement when I found out that he only just knew his notes, that he could just tinkle out a scale on the pianoforte, and that, as to reading an orchestral score, he did not know one clef or one bar from another! He was intensely amused and laughed heartily over my obvious disappointment at his ignorance! I took his little hand in mine and led him up to the gramophone and played him a record of the Prelude to "The Mastersingers." And then an extraordinary change took place. The laughing little face became serious and strongly lined, and I noticed the same curious drawn look which I had seen when he was conducting. Immediately he was all alert and ejaculated little criticisms in French here and there, such as "Why does the oboe stand out in such-and-such a passage; the strings are remarkably good and play well together; the tempo in that passage is slightly quicker than I feel it."

Genuine, intelligent, correct criticism! In recalling all this, I am as nonplussed to-day as I was at the time, and it will be disappointing to the reader to know that I have neither solved the mystery nor can I explain it, and that I am perfectly prepared to hear that many are still sceptical and imagine that I laboured under hallucinations! But I haven't quite done with young Willy Ferraro yet! I found another remarkable side to him. He was a drawing-room entertainer *par excellence* at the age of six! I invited a few people to meet him, and his imitations of Sarah Bernhardt, of Duse, and of a certain *prima donna* were so funny, so realistic, so true to life, and so fascinating that all one could do was to accept what one actually saw and heard and leave the explanation to those more versed in such matters.

I have told a plain, unvarnished, and true tale, and am glad to have had the opportunity to place it on record. I believe that Sir Henry J. Wood went and saw Willy conduct, and was as astonished as myself. He was bound to be. Certain it is that several members of my professorial staff at the Guildhall School who heard the boy were as completely dumbfounded. The final compliment of all came when the members of the Royal Albert Hall Orchestra got up a subscription among themselves to present him with a piece of silver. British orchestral men do not pay such a compliment as this to a humbug, a trickster, or a charlatan! Willy Ferraro will for ever remain a mystery to me, and at the same time I consider him the greatest of all prodigies I have known.



Willy Ferraro playing with his younger brother.

This horrible man went all the way with him to Leicester Square.

The Enemy

by

HUGH WALPOLE

ILLUSTRATED BY
W. SMITHSON BROADHEAD

AT a quarter-past eight in the morning, every working day of the year, summer and winter, little Jack Harding left his little house in Ealing for the Charing Cross Road, where he had a little bookshop. A month every year he took a holiday, but even during that month he might be said to go through the same procedure, because, wherever he might be, he woke up at half-past seven and, lying on his back in bed, went through all the stages of dressing, having breakfast, hurrying to the station, changing at Hammersmith, getting out at Leicester Square, walking up to the little shop, scolding the boy with adenoids, opening his correspondence, and entering happily on the business of the day. It was luxurious indeed to lie on one's back and take this journey, hearing the waves murmur outside one's window, or seeing the clouds pass in lazy procession, or hearing the separator hard at work in some distant part of the farmhouse. He enjoyed his holiday, of course, but he enjoyed still more getting back to work again. He loved his shop, although it made him the barest

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living in these difficult post-war days, and he could not be said to care very generally for books for their own sake. He was a little man, stout and round like a rolling-pin, with very small feet and hands, of which he was immensely proud. He was cheery and optimistic by temperament, loved to hear the sound of his own voice, and, although he was forty-five, was still unmarried. He enjoyed the society of ladies, but liked them in general rather than in particular. An old woman looked after him and his little house, cheated him and robbed him, scolded him and abused him, except when he was ill, when she adored him and took an enormous amount of trouble to make him comfortable. He had only one enemy in the world.

NOW the point about this enemy was that he had seldom spoken to him. Some years ago, when he had first come to live in Ealing, he had noticed on his regular morning journey a large, heavy, red-faced man, who lived apparently in his own street, always plunged out of his door at precisely the moment when he, Harding, passed it, and so plunged apparently in order to have a bright morning conversation. In fact, it very soon became Harding's conviction that the large, heavy gentleman waited behind the dining-room curtain until he saw him approach and then made his plunge. Now Harding did not want a bright morning conversation. His mind was busy with the details of the day's work. The catalogue that he was preparing, the cheap lot of books that had come in yesterday and would, most of them, find their way into the six-penny box outside, and the chances of discovering some unexpected find that would add glory to the aforementioned catalogue: such questions as these made a morning conversation with a stranger extremely irritating, and Harding was English enough to suspect at once of the most abominable crimes anybody who spoke to him without a proper Ealing introduction.

This large man was, in Harding's view, exactly the person of whom you would expect a crime. On the first morning the large man had insisted on walking with Harding to the station, he talked in a great booming voice about the weather, about the neighbouring music-hall and a dainty little piece who was dancing there, about some shares he had somewhere, about his being a widower, about some geraniums in his back garden, about some horses, about indigestion, and about where he was going for his summer holiday. All these things before they reached the station at all. Then in the train he sat next to Harding, might indeed be said almost to sit over him, and went on with a long, cheerful proclamation about potatoes and beans and cabbages, shouting it all out at the top of his voice in rivalry with the noisy train. If there was one thing in the world that Harding detested it was talking against a train, he himself having a rather small, shrill voice which was not at its best when it was unduly raised, as he very well knew. Then this horrible man stuck closely to him at Hammersmith, marched down the platform with him, pushed past the ticket collector, marched up the other platform, and sat over him once again in the Tube. He went all the way with him to Leicester Square and would, Harding believed, have followed him to his bookshop had he not managed to lose him in the crowd. Work was spoilt for Harding that day. Whenever he tried to think clearly that man's booming voice seemed to get in the way, his large, bushy, black moustache seemed to whisk up and down the bookshelves, and his broad, aggressive chest overshadowed the customers.

Harding had not been encouraging, but nevertheless, next day, there was the man again, darting down the steps with a "Well, good morning, good morning, how are we to-day?" so that Harding, who detested to be called "we," was so deeply annoyed that he murmured that he had forgotten something, hurried back to his house again, and was twenty minutes late at the bookshop.

This was how it began, and every day now the poor little man was overshadowed by this horrible stranger. This horrible man's name was Tonks, and he had something to do with vegetables. He had no children and was thinking of marrying again, but couldn't quite make up his mind. He gave his reluctant companion most unpleasant and intimate details of his earlier married life. He had an especially disagreeable habit of putting his hand on little Harding's shoulder. The really strange thing was that Tonks seemed to have no particular liking for any other of the numerous company who went down to the City at that same hour day by day. There were, as Harding complained, any number of men who would have been delighted with Tonks's confidences, but Tonks appeared to wish to have none of them, and Harding, being a modest little man, could only explain this as a quite definite persecution, deliberately indulged in by Tonks for his own especial annoyance.

Now the passion of Harding's life was his bookshop. He thought about it all day, slept with it all night, ate it at every meal, and was never so happy as when he was imagining wonderful plans for its future. These plans were not really of a literary kind. His vision and dream was an enormous

shop containing thousands and thousands and thousands of volumes. Room succeeded room, rows and rows of bookshelves towered up into the mysterious mists of the ceiling. There were so many books that nobody knew how many there were, nor ever would know, and with this sense of size and multitude went also a keen pleasure in what may vulgarly be called "spotting the winner." Harding never went to horse-races; as he once explained to a friend, he did his horse-racing in the bookshop.

This was just at the time when there was a passion, both in America and England, for modern first editions, and Harding had a special catalogue of modern firsts of which he was immensely proud. This catalogue might have been better, and he would certainly have made more money had he gone in for quality rather than quantity, but he loved his catalogues to be large and full of important names. He had a list of modern writers, and used to mark them up and down in this list week by week according to the value of the moment. At one time it would be, we will say, Drinkwater and De la Mare who were going to win the literary stakes, and his modern catalogue that quarter would be full of Drinkwaters and De la Mares, a great many of them of no value at all, but he would put little mystical notes under the items, like "Very scarce" or "Rare in this state," and then hope for the best. Nothing pleased him so much as when somebody came into his shop, asked for some tawdry novel, and was then lured by him into a consideration of rare firsts. He loved to see them open their eyes in wide amazement as he explained to them the wonderful speculation that investing in these mysterious Drinkwaters would be, of them going up week by week, that somebody in his shop had bought two years ago a little slim Masefield for almost nothing at all, and that now ten pounds wouldn't buy it. Ladies might be seen going from his shop with a little bundle of mysterious poets, when they had intended to purchase only a very unmysterious story to read in the train. Had this been all, he might truly be said to be encouraging a love of real literature among the masses, but unfortunately those same ladies very often returned at a later date with the same mysterious poets under their arm, expecting him very naively to give them an increased price for these same writers and being greatly indignant when they found that these books had gone down rather than up.

NOTHING is perhaps more curious in ordinary daily life than the way in which somebody who has perhaps a very remote connection with ourselves and our affairs creeps in upon our consciousness and dominates it. I remember once staying with a man in a fine country house, surrounded by a magnificent park, shut off most securely from all the world, and worried almost to death by the personality of a certain butcher in a neighbouring village. He didn't even get his meat from the man; he was simply conscious of him, of his red face, his stout body, his bloodstained knife, and this man interfered so seriously with his happiness that he sold his house and went elsewhere. That is an extreme case, I dare say, but we must all of us be able to remember times when we have been affected in something of this fashion.

Mr. Tonks crept in upon the consciousness of Mr. Harding very slowly. Mr. Harding could not really be said to be a very imaginative man. He had only an imagination about the possible size of his bookshop. With regard to his own daily affairs he was very practical and sensible. Nevertheless he found himself after a week or two hesitating before he took his walk to the station. Would Tonks be there springing down the steps towards him? Would his cheery laugh ring through South Ealing? Would Harding this time be ahead of him? He noticed soon that he did not move off to the station with his accustomed alacrity, that he paused a little in his bit of garden, and that once or twice he peered down the street to see whether there were anyone there. He began to have a physical feeling about Tonks, as though he were an egg ever so slightly bad, or a bird just a tiny bit too high. He contemplated the possibility of reaching the station by some other route. He thought that perhaps it would be almost as quick to go from Ealing Broadway, but, as a matter of honest fact, he knew that it would not. Then he concocted for himself an elaborate conversation with Tonks: how he said to him, very politely, "Good morning," how they started off to the station together, and how on the way he explained very gravely but with the utmost politeness that it was quite essential for him to have absolute silence on his journey down to Charing Cross Road because there were so many business problems that only that morning hour before the morning rush could solve. He saw himself then bowing to Mr. Tonks, saying that he hoped that he understood, that no kind of offence was intended, and that if there was one person in the world with whom he would like to talk at that moment it was Mr. Tonks, but that, in fact, there must be nobody at all. Harding thought this all out very carefully, and it seemed to him that there was nothing whatever to prevent him from carrying out his desire. There

was, in fact, nothing to prevent him except that the words would not come. Something tied him when he saw Mr. Tonks, just as though a seal had been placed on his lips, and this made him more irritated than ever. "I should have thought," he complained angrily to himself, "that the fellow could see that I don't want him. I surely make it plain enough." However, the fellow did not see, and Mr. Tonks became more and more amiable, more and more voluble, was ever more and more persistently there.

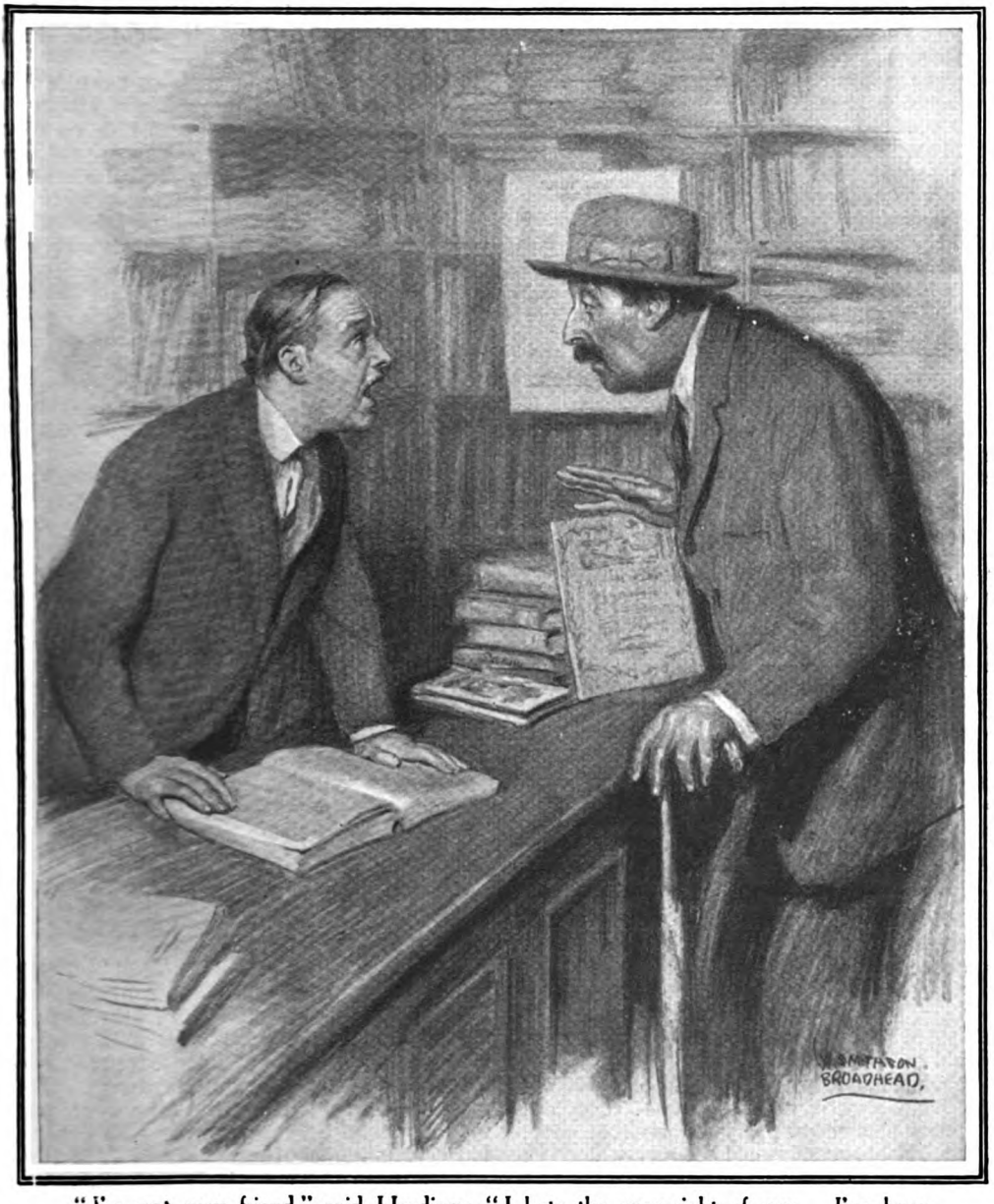
THE next stage in the proceedings was that Harding dreamt about Tonks. He was not a man who dreamt very often; only occasionally, when he had had a late supper, he fell screaming from an enormous height, and he did occasionally dream about somebody coming into his shop with a first "Pilgrim's Progress", in perfect condition, and offering it to him for sixpence, but he was on the whole most definitely not a dreamer. One night he saw Tonks standing in his room in his night-shirt. The vision was so vivid, the smile on Tonks's face so real, the night-shirt so exactly what in real life it would be, that it was hard to believe it was a dream. "What have you come here for?" he asked, angrily. "I'm never going to leave you again," the figure replied. Poor Harding woke with a scream. Then the dream came quite frequently. There were different aspects of it. The worst was when Tonks's naked feet could be heard padding up the stairs. Then there was a pause outside the bedroom door, and Tonks's laboured breathing came like a whistle through the woodwork. Then the door slowly opened, and first Tonks's head was seen peering round, and then the whole big body came into view. Then the door was softly closed, and Tonks stood there watching. Always Harding said the same thing—"What have you come here for?" and Tonks said, "I'm never going to leave you again."

There suddenly came a week when Tonks did not appear—no sign of him at all. Harding absolutely sighed with relief. Perhaps Tonks had gone away. Perhaps he was on a holiday and would be drowned in the sea or ridden over by a motor-car. Perhaps he had committed some crime and left the country. At any rate, for a week he disappeared, and Harding was astounded and secretly irritated to find that towards the end of the week he missed him quite seriously, just because to have somebody so thoroughly to dislike seemed to give piquancy to the work of the day, but, lo and behold! there on Monday morning was Tonks again, hurrying down the steps with his, "Well, well, how are we, then, to-day?" and then going on to explain that he had had a horribly bad cold, that his throat had hurt him something terribly, and his inside not been at all the thing. On that day Harding could have killed him, and he did manage to say as they drew near to the station, "Look here, I've got to think something out. Let me be quiet, won't you?" to which Tonks, who had been sneezing hysterically all down the road, replied through his cold-invaded nose: "All right, old feller; forgive by sneezing, won't you? Terrible things to get rid of, colds."

The next stage of this affair was that Tonks's personality invaded the shop. It can only have been hysteria on the part of Harding, and he was most certainly very far from being an hysterical person, but one morning, opening the door of the shop, stepping in, sniffing as he invariably did the aroma of old decaying books, the beautiful scent of piled-up dusty volumes, it seemed to him that Tonks had followed in after him. He whisked sharply around, but of course there was no one there, but for half a moment he could have sworn that out of the tail of his eye he saw the heavy shoulder, the rough red of the cheek, the beginning of that hateful smile.

"That man's getting on my nerves," he said to himself. "I really must refuse to think of him any longer." But he could not help himself. There was something about Tonks as though he had been Frankenstein's monster of Harding's own creation. Harding, like all Englishmen, was, underneath his British exterior, a desperately sentimental man. A little of a sycophant too, something of a crawler, and the odd thing was that if he had met Tonks just a little differently—that is, on a convivial evening at the house of a mutual friend—he might have liked him very much indeed, so close are love and hatred to one another. As it was, he hated him, and every day with increasing fervour. He was perhaps working too hard, bothering himself too strenuously about his new catalogue. Perhaps he was taking too little exercise and eating things that did not agree with him. Whatever the explanation, certain it is that Tonks's shadow was always now appearing at the shop, hiding behind the counter, squeezing itself in between the covers of books, balancing itself precariously on ladders, always turning up in the most unexpected places. And then one day came the climax. Tonks did make a real appearance in the true flesh. He came in one morning about midday, sauntering in, one hand in his pocket, smiling all over his face. Harding was alone in the shop at the time.

"Well, well, how are we?" he called out. "I've caught you in your lair at last. You



"I'm not your friend," said Harding; "I hate the very sight of you. I've been wanting to tell you this a long time."

never would tell me where you worked, and I've had to find it out for myself."

So he'd been spying on him? Harding's face crimsoned. He had to bend over a book that he was examining to hide his agitation. Yes, he'd been spying on him, the beast!

Tonks waited a moment for a reply, and getting none went on most genially, "Well, well, I'm sure you're busy to-day. I've come in to buy a book from you."

"What sort of a book?" said Harding, almost in a whisper.

"Well, it's for a young lady friend of mine, and she's taking a long journey up to the North of Scotland, and wants something to read. 'Why,' I said to her, 'I know the very man. He's a great friend of

mine and very clever, and I'll ask him to advise me.' "

Harding suddenly looked up and leaned across the counter, his face pushed forward. The two men were very close to one another.

" I'm not your friend," he said, " and I'll have you know it. I hate the very sight of you. I've been wanting to tell you this a long time."

The smile suddenly left Tonks's face as though it had been snatched away by somebody standing behind him. His eyes were wide with surprise.

" Well, I never ! " he said. " Do you really feel like that about me ? I wonder why ? "

" Never mind why," said Harding, furiously. " The fact's true, and that's enough. *You*'ve been irritating me for months, walking along to the station with me, only *I* haven't had the courage to tell you so. I should have thought a man would have seen it."

He bent down, his face still crimson, staring into his book. The puzzled expression deepened on Tonks's countenance. His whole body seemed to grow puzzled, too. His waistcoat developed new creases, his hands seemed to wrinkle. Then his great chest heaved a mighty sigh.

" It's strange," he said. " I wonder if you know anything against me ? Not that there is much against me that I can think of, but it's curious because I took a liking to you. A great liking to you. Most unusually quick it was. At the very first sight of you, as one might say. I suppose I'm slow to notice things, but there's never been a man I'd have liked for a friend so much as I'd have liked you. There's something about you sort of appeals to me. I suppose you couldn't explain a little ? "

" No, I couldn't," said Harding, ferociously. " I just don't like you, and that's all there is about it. We're better apart, if you'll excuse me for saying so."

" Oh, I'll excuse you," said Tonks, shaking his head slowly, pulling himself together ; " but it's a great pity—a terrible pity. I'm a lonely sort of man. Being a widower's a bit difficult, because, you see, if you've liked the first woman it's most improbable you're going to be pleased with the second, and if you haven't liked the first woman, why, you're off matrimony altogether, so to speak. If you understand what I mean. I'm sort of lonely in that house. I've been wanting to ask you in for weeks past. I've got an organ in the dining-room you'd love to hear. It's as good as a church. You've never seen my dog, have you ? "

" No, I haven't," said Harding, " and don't want to."

" Well, well," said Tonks, slowly, " that's the end of that. I'm glad I've got the dog, though," he said, as he went out of the shop.

THERE began after this an even worse period for Harding, because although Tonks never actually met him now on the way to the station, never spoke to him indeed, he was always just round the corner. Harding could never pass his house without feeling sure he was hiding behind the dining-room curtain and longing to rush out and speak to him. At Hammersmith their paths were sometimes crossed, and then Tonks had a mixture of pride and pleading on his large round face that was terrible to see. Harding had now a curious sense that in one way or another he was in the wrong. Absurd, of course, but there you are. He only hated the man the more for it. The man became a proverb in his mind. When he was talking with his friends he would quote him as an instance of the depth of his feeling. " There's a man I know," he would say, " whom you wouldn't believe the way I hate, and I really couldn't tell you why. Just his face or his smile or something. Case of Dr. Fell, I suppose. Really gives me the creeps. You might say there's nothing against him, and yet in a way there is. His being alive's against him, if you understand what I mean." And then all the friends would laugh together and say that they understood perfectly.

There was one morning a most difficult moment when Tonks came down the steps with his dog, the most hideous mongrel you ever saw, kind of a fox-terrier with a black spot on its nose, and one ear half bitten off in a dog fight. The awkward thing was that the dog leapt upon Harding as though he were an old, old friend.

" Come 'ere, Spot, come 'ere ! " Tonks called out, looking extremely embarrassed, but Spot persisted in claiming Harding for an old friend. He simply wouldn't leave him alone. The two men stopped and looked at one another, and Harding had the most curious feeling, as though he would like to go up and embrace Tonks and put his hat straight. A most curious and un-British feeling, as everybody will allow, and Tonks and the dog went one way and Harding went another. Bah ! how he hated that man ! Why couldn't he go and live somewhere else ? Nevertheless, all the way to the shop he felt ashamed of himself and couldn't settle down to anything for the rest of the day.

THREE days later, about six in the evening, he was returning home. He left the shop a little earlier than usual because it was so fine and pleasant. He wanted to get into his little garden and do

some digging. He got out at South Ealing Station and walked briskly down the road homewards.

Outside Tonks's house there was an agitation. Several people were hanging about and a policeman was looking into space.

"Excuse me, constable, is there anything the matter?" asked Harding.

"Gentleman been run over by a motor omnibus," said the policeman. "Just round the corner here. No use taking 'im to the 'ospital. 'E's done for."

"Done for!" gasped Harding.

"Dead as mutton," said the policeman. Harding turned white. It was as though he himself had killed him.

"Beg pardon, sir," said the policeman. "Are you a friend of the gentleman?"

"Why?" asked Harding.

"Why, because 'e don't seem to have anybody in the house who does belong. Nobody but an old woman who comes in and does for 'im and a dawg. The dawg won't leave his bed. Must 'ave been a lonely sort of life for a man."

"Yes, I am a friend of his," said Harding, suddenly, "a very great friend."

He pushed past the policeman and went into the house. There was a doctor there, an old woman crying, the dog sitting on his hindquarters at the foot of the bed and not moving. There was Tonks himself in a nice clean night-shirt with his hair brushed, looking very calm and quiet, a suggestion of a smile hovering about his mouth.

"Are you a friend of the gentleman?" said the policeman.

"Yes," said Harding, and went into the house.

"Caught him in the stomach," said the doctor. "Instantaneous. Are you a friend of the deceased?" he asked.

"Yes, I am," said Harding, "a great friend."

"Well, there doesn't seem to be anybody else," said the doctor. "Must have been a lonely sort of life."

The old woman sobbed. "Oh, 'e was a kind gentleman," she said.

"I was his best friend," said Harding. "We used to go into town together every morning. I'll see to everything."

He did. For weeks he worked at Tonks's affairs, which were in a curiously complicated state. There seemed to be no relations. In the end, when everything was sold and all debts paid, there were a few hundred pounds, and these Harding gave to the old woman. No one seemed to question for a moment that Harding was Tonks's best friend. The action of the dog only confirmed it. He refused to go near anyone save Harding. Harding had to take him home to live with him.

"No, he's not much of a dog," he would say, "but, you see, his master was my best friend, so there you are."

And the funny part of it all was that that was true.

How I Practise for the Championship

by

TOM NEWMAN

Maker of the World's Record Break—1,274.

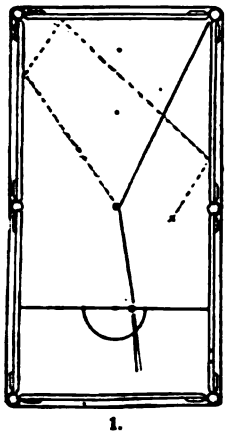
I WILL ask you to come with me to my practice table when I am getting into trim for a run over the championship course. My plan is to begin by placing the red ball on the centre spot. I have the cue-ball in hand, and my training programme is to "stick to it" until I make two dozen consecutive losing hazards off the spotted red, playing alternately into the right and left top pockets, and bringing the red ball round into excellent position after every stroke. I place the cue-ball three inches inside the right or left hand spot of the "D," as the case may be, play each stroke to get position (as shown in diagram 1), and peg away steadily until I have made the twenty-four consecutive hazards as they really should be made. Incidentally, it is most trying to begin all over again after making twenty-three alternating hazards to perfection, and then just failing to bring the red over the middle pocket in the very last stroke, although the cue-ball has reached the pocket all right. But it has to be done. I cannot afford to slur over one bad positional stroke in my training.

Tom Newman.
Photo, Sport and General.

Amateurs of all degrees of billiard skill will find this training test of mine a most useful guide to form. Try it, for preference as a novel and interesting little competition among a number of players. Allow each competitor to have several attempts, and the man who comes out on top will always prove to be the identical gentleman who starts a very long way behind scratch in the club handicap. And by the time this little contest is over, a working knowledge will be gained of what continuity of accuracy really means.

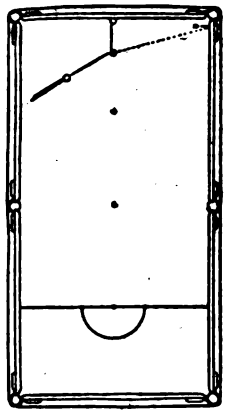
The observant critic will doubtless object that I make most of my points at the top of the table, so why should I flog away at long losing hazards from hand? The explanation is that, no matter how or where a stroke may be played on a billiard table, the cuemanship must be above reproach, or failure is certain. And these long losers are the best test of accurate cuemanship. The ball-to-ball contact must be beautifully exact, the centre of the cue-ball covering the extreme outside edge of the red at every time of contact. The cue-ball must be struck without the least side, and the swing of the cue must be of exactly that strength which will bring the red ball into the desired position over a middle pocket. All these

things have to be kept in mind at the same time. The mere playing the cue-ball into the pocket off the red only adds three points to my score, and is not what I want unless I have also directed the red ball as I wish. But if I can make my practice run of these long losers off the red ball, if I make twenty-four of them in succession to my complete satisfaction, then I know that my cuemanship is up to concert pitch for the top-of-the-table game or any other phase of billiards.



1.

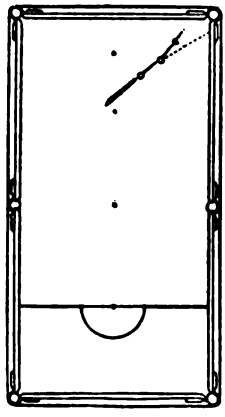
But I cannot stop at once, put up my cue, and say that passing the long-loser test is all that is needed to enable me to retain my title. There are matters at the top of the table requiring my attention. Suppose we begin by placing the red on the billiard spot, the object white tight against the top cushion directly in line with the red, and the cue-ball twenty-two inches from the side cushion and twenty-three inches from the top cushion. Diagram 2 makes the stroke evident enough, and any tyro can see at a glance that a plain ball-to-ball cannon from red to white is perfectly easy. But the correct positional sequence is not so simple as it looks. Play the cannon; you may make a five shot—a bad stroke—you may cannon too fine and slowly on the white, thus leaving you facing trouble instead of an easy shot at the red; you may even make the cannon and leave a losing hazard off the red—a leave you are not entitled to grumble at, but not up to championship form. When I play the cannon, I drop the cue-ball so full on the object white that a kiss results which sends the cue-ball softly away from the top cushion without making a perceptible change in the position of the object white. At the same time, the red rebounds a few inches from the side cushion and comes to rest exactly where it will enable me to continue my spot-end break by pocketing the red and leaving the cue-ball just where a similar cannon can be played from the other side of the spot. It is not by any means difficult to make this stroke with positional perfection; any twenty-break performer might do so at the first attempt. But if he tries to make it a dozen times in succession he will see just how easy it is to spoil position. That's the rub! The permissible margin of error is cut away to almost nothing in my case. I must control the balls to a fraction of an inch with an accuracy which is almost second nature to me, and appears supremely easy to the spectator.



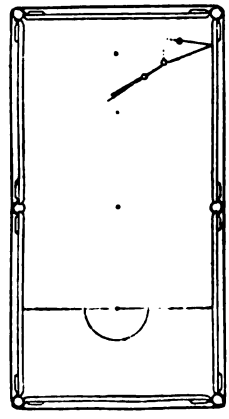
2.

This simple little cannon at the spot end, if played over a few times, will tend to solve a problem which puzzles many keen supporters of the game. They cannot understand why it looks so easy to make a break at the top of the table, but proves so difficult when they endeavour to do it. I venture to say that even a useful amateur would have to put in more than one spell of hard practice before he would make this cannon six times in succession. Yet the correct handling of this cannon has to be as near inevitable with me as anything can be, and, without dogmatizing on the point, I think it is more a matter of practice than extraordinary natural aptitude.

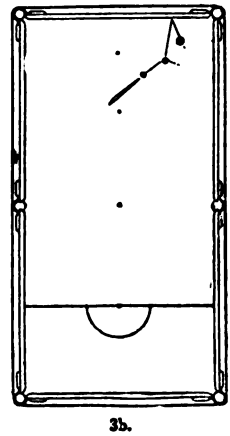
Another simple cannon, illustrated by diagrams 3, 3a, and 3b, will give a further insight into the inner meaning of the top-of-the-table game. Measurements are not necessary; it is easy to place the balls from the



3.

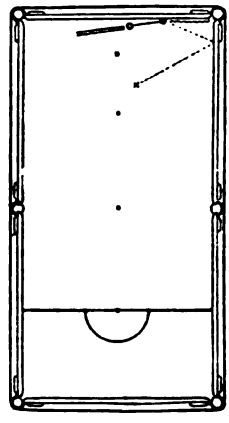


3a.



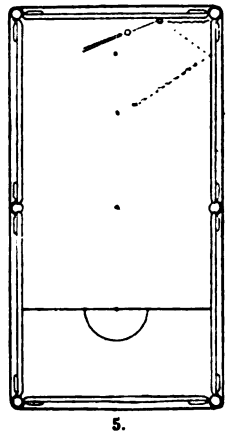
3b.

diagrams, when it will be seen that the cannon can be made quite simply in three different ways, either of which should leave desirable position. A plain follow-through, a cannon *via* the top cushion, or a cannon from the side cushion are equally playable, and almost equally commendable in every sense, provided that in each case the strength is right.



4.

Now let us to billiards of a more open type. Place the red ball sixteen inches from the top pocket and tight against the top cushion, the cue-ball lying a foot from the red and directly behind it. You can pocket the red rather slowly, you can make the six shot by imparting a little follow and pocket side to the cue-ball. These strokes are very easy, but the amateur in search of a safe positional sequence should practise putting the red down with just enough run on the cue-ball to leave a half-ball loser into the opposite top pocket for his next stroke. Very likely this leave might suit me nicely even in a championship game; but it is quite possible that I might not wish to open the game, it might suit me better to continue close play at the spot end; everything depends on the position of the object white. It is interesting to move the cue-ball two inches from the cushion in a direct line down the table. The result is a leave just about as difficult as the preceding one was easy. The run-through loser into the top pocket is not feasible, the balls are sure to kiss, and the only stroke worth attempting is to pocket the red —not at all an easy shot to make every time. Having practised it and others like it for hours on end, I can say I have mastered it; but it is not what I call a friendly leave, and, especially in the stress of a championship game, the best thing I like about this stroke is when I see the boy shaping to fish the red ball out of the pocket. Move the cue-ball another couple of inches down the table, and the leave is one which five amateurs out of six should face with confidence. Play rather full on the red, with plenty of left side on the cue-ball, and the run-through loser into the top pocket, as shown in diagram 4, is so easy that I should not expect to miss it once in a season's play. Amateurs who fail repeatedly at this stroke usually do so because their cueing is stiff and cramped. Let the cue swing freely, thus imparting brisk forward rotation to the cue-ball, and the stroke will become easy to many who seldom or never make it simply because they jab at the cue-ball like a girl poking a fire, and thus get a sticky, semi-stun effect which will never make the hazard.



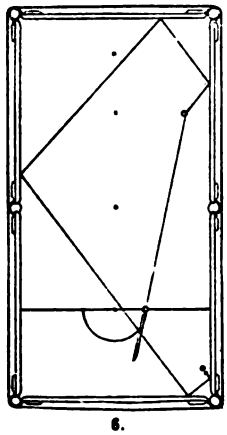
5.

Move the cue-ball a further two inches from the top cushion, as shown in diagram 5, and the run-through loser is still the game, played exactly as before, except that the ball-to-ball contact is a fraction of an inch finer to avoid a kiss. These instructive run-through losing hazards are well worth playing over quietly, noting the difference in the run of the red which the change in ball-to-ball contact makes in the second stroke, and always playing with the right strength to leave the red offering a tempting loser from hand to follow. As a matter of fact, the correct positional strength is exactly what is required to make the hazard as easily as possible. The cue-ball is now six inches from the top cushion, the position of the red remaining unchanged, and if you move the cue-ball another couple of inches up the table you have passed the limit where the run-through hazard is playable, except possibly as an exhibition stroke. In off the red is still the game, but you must play a sharp, plain ball stroke, rather fine on the red to avoid a kiss, the cue-ball entering the pocket with plenty of run on it. Quite an easy stroke, a certainty for any capable cueman, but often left severely alone by players who dread it because the red is "tight up." Really, this makes no difference as regards ease of scoring, provided my instructions are followed.

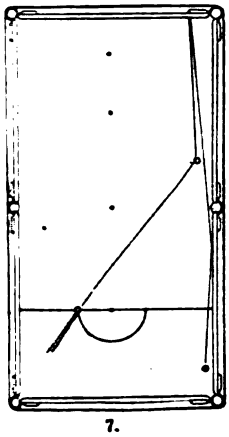
Except in my first practice run, I find I have played a series of strokes in which the cue-ball lies fairly near to the object ball. I suppose I have done this because command of the close game means so much to me in championship billiards. But one does not always find the balls left in a small sector of the table. This happens much less frequently than I could wish in actual play. Consequently, one has to practise strokes which give the balls a run for their money, so to speak, and diagram 6 shows a typical specimen of this description.

The diagram shows the lie of the balls so well that measurements are not necessary. In this case, I play for the all-round cannon.

Placing the cue-ball on the right-hand spot of the "D," I make the stroke with a nice clean swing of the cue, putting on a little left-hand side and hitting the object white rather finer than half-ball, the cue-ball proceeding to make the cannon off no fewer than five cushions, as shown in the diagram. I have practised this type of cannon so often that the odds are something like fifty to one in favour of my making it. They are perhaps a shade less as regards the cannon stroke shown in diagram 7, which is again indicated plainly enough in the drawing. In this case I have to establish half-ball contact with the object white with just enough right-hand side to make the cannon *via* the side cushion as shown.



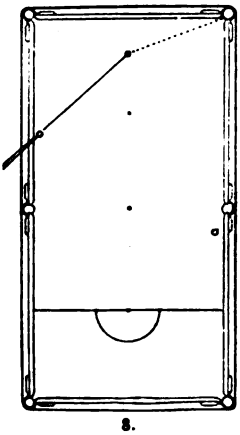
6.



7.

When practising a very difficult winning hazard I place the cue-ball tight, or nearly tight, against the side cushion and a couple of feet above the centre pocket, the white lying as shown in diagram 8. Obviously, the only thing to do is to pocket the red in the right-hand top pocket, and the stroke is a teaser. You must play it. If you miss it you present your opponent with a nice opening for a break; an effective safety stroke is almost out of the game, so the only thing to do is to put all you know about billiards into the making of the hazard.

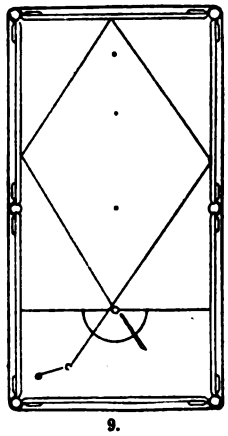
There is something else which increases the difficulty of this particular stroke. A glance at the diagram will show that the cue-ball lies to the right of the spotted red, and even if you place the cue-ball closer to the red, thereby rendering the stroke much easier, the fact remains that it is easier still if you move the cue-ball above the billiard spot just as much towards the left of the red as it is towards the right in the hazard we are discussing, and I confess I am unable to explain why this should be so.



8.

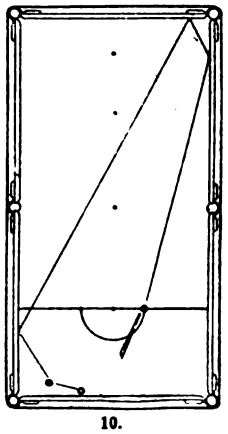
I do not specialize in leaving double baulks for myself—such form is scarcely good enough to win championships—but this is much more than compensated for by the eager readiness with which my opponent will present me with the same.

The double baulks I am about to attempt are shown very clearly in diagrams 9 and 10, and in each case it will be seen that the red lies open to a profitable score if the balls are not disturbed. So in Number 9 I play for the cannon all round the table, with running side on the cue-ball to get the requisite angles correctly.



9.

Number 10 is another "all-rounder" played with running side. In each case the diagram shows where to place the cue-ball, but I have not given exact measurements because these strokes can never be reduced to a certainty. They are well worth practising on the lines illustrated in the diagrams. An invaluable knowledge of the angles of the table can be gained in this way. At the very worst, you ought to break up the scoring opening now presented; you may do this and leave safety, you may score the cannon and leave safety for yourself, you may make the cannon and leave good position if the fates are kind, very kind; and, believe me, a little help from this quarter makes a lot of difference even in a championship contest.



10.

I just sat there holding the portrait in the circle of the lamplight.

MARK DANVER'S SIN

by

"SAPPER" (H.C.McNEILE)

ILLUSTRATED BY E.G.OAKDALE

THE letter came to me at breakfast—a bulky one, addressed in an unknown hand. The eagle eye of my hostess's small son had at once spotted the stamp, and an instant demand had gone forth that it should be presented to him in due course. It was a Tonga Island—one of those nice stamps which portray strange birds and animals in beautiful colours—and even as I promised he should have it, I was trying to think who on earth could be writing to me from such an outlandish spot. The letter had been re-addressed on to me from my club, and after a while, in deference to young Jack's continued demands for the stamp, I gave up the delightful pastime of guessing and opened it. There were two enclosures inside: one a heavily-sealed envelope addressed to me in a well-known hand, but one that I had not seen for many long years; the other just a covering letter.

It was the envelope I studied first. What could have induced dear old Mark Danver to break the silence of years, and then label his letter "strictly private"? And what a strange coincidence that it should have reached me in this of all houses!

Then I glanced at the covering letter, and for a moment I felt as if someone had given me a blow in the face. It was from a firm of lawyers, and was brief and to the point.

"Dear Sir," it ran,—*"The enclosed was amongst the effects of the late Mr. Mark Danver. We should be glad if you would acknowledge the receipt in due course."*

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I laid down the letter by my untouched breakfast, and stared out of the window. Poor old Mark dead—that priceless, cheery soul who had so strangely dropped out of our lives. In Tonga Island of all places. For he had known my host and hostess too, known them before I did. And now, seated at their table, I had got the news of his death.

I don't know why I said nothing at the time; I think perhaps that it was because Mark had been my particular pal, and now from the grave he was speaking to me. And I wanted to hear what the old chap had to say first. So I put his letter unopened in my pocket, and I gave young Jack his stamp. And half an hour later I carried a deck chair into the shade of a chestnut tree and carefully slit the envelope. Inside were several sheets of foolscap covered with Mark's writing, and for a moment my eyes grew a little blurred. Then I began to read.

THEY tell me, old man, that I haven't very long to go. The doctor here, who diagnoses quite well when he's sober and operates quite well when he's drunk, broke it to me this morning. Incidentally I'd guessed it already, and I can't pretend that I mind very much. But since the end is coming fairly soon, I want to write to you, my oldest pal, and explain why I have cut myself adrift from you all these last few years. And also I want to put on record a confession which will come as a big surprise to you. In case anything should happen in the future you will have it by you, and will know what use to make of it. And apart from that, it's going to be a bit of a comfort to me to put it down on paper, and know that someone I trust will see it. One gets a bit cowardly towards the end—sometimes. Depends, I suppose, on the race you've run. And if there's been a bad foul it gibbers at you and mocks you. Especially at night, when you can't sleep. I've been sleeping damnably just lately.

There will be parts of tnis confession of mine that you know already; but I'm going to put it down in full in case it should ever be needed. I'll tell it to you, Dick, in the form of a story—my first attempt at literary work. But they say that everyone could write at least one yarn—the yarn of their own life, so perhaps the fact that it is true will atone for lack of style. Anyway—here goes.

It's just eight years ago this month that I was up on a shooting trip in Uganda. And on the way back through British East Africa I went down with a bad dose of fever. Luckily for me, there was a farm close by, and my boys carried me there. That farm belonged to a youngster whom you got to know afterwards—Jack Onslow. And since you know him I won't waste time describing him for you. Just sufficient to say that he was one of the straightest, cleanest boys that I have ever met; a white man through and through. He was there by himself growing coffee, and he wouldn't hear of my going on until I was absolutely fit. As a matter of fact I think he was glad of the companionship; it's lonely work, that sort of life, as you know.

So I stopped on with him after I was fit, and day by day I got to know him and like him better. And then there came an evening when I asked him why he didn't get married.

" It's not good, Jack," I said, " for a man to live in the wilds alone." He turned a bit red, and fumbled in his pocket. Of course, I guessed at once what he was looking for, but I tried to look suitably surprised when he handed me a battered leather case.

" I'm engaged, old man," he said, a bit awkwardly. " There's her photograph. And I'm just trying to get the place into a real going concern before she comes out to join me."

I took the case and I opened it, and I tell you, Dick, I was staggered. It was just a coloured photograph of a girl, and for sheer flawless beauty I had never seen her equal. She was more than beautiful—she was lovely, with the sweetest expression in her eyes. And I just sat there holding the portrait in the circle of the lamplight, drinking her in.

I hardly heard what Jack was saying, so absorbed was I in that perfect face. He was rambling on, talking a little disjointedly, a little shyly. His face was in the shadow, and for a while he talked of the things that lie deep down in a man—the things which it is not given often for another man to hear. I don't suppose he evolved a single original idea, but who wants original ideas? He just told me in a queer, half-jerky voice of his hopes and plans; of what life was going to bring him; of what he was going to do. But always he came back to his girl; it was " we "—never " I."

" She's wonderful, Mark," he said, and he took the frame out of my hand. " She's such a marvellous pal."

" Well, frankly, Jack," I answered, " I felt nervous when I saw you producing that frame. I have suffered before from lovers' rhapsodies, and my sole coherent thought was that it's lucky we don't all think alike. But this girl of yours strikes me as being the loveliest thing I've ever seen. You're a lucky devil."

He looked at me quietly.

" Wait till you see her herself, Mark.

She's a thousand times more lovely than this photograph."

I smiled, and reached for the whisky bottle.

"I'll take your word for it, old man," I said. "In the meantime, a final night-cap, and I'm turning in."

And I remember that night, as I was going to my room, I looked back at the wrong moment. He had his lips pressed to the picture, and I could almost feel the savage intensity of his longing. It 's not good for a man to be alone in the Tropics.

I SUPPOSE it was a week later that it happened. I was returning from shooting when the native house-boy met me gibbering like a monkey. He was in the last extremity of terror, but I caught enough to make me start running like a hare towards the bungalow. Outside, the other servants were cowering together like frightened sheep, and I dashed past them up the steps and into the living-room. Seated at the table, quite motionless, with a revolver in his hand and an empty bottle of whisky beside him, was Jack Onslow. In the other hand he clutched a letter, and in front of him was a copy of the *Times*.

He paid not the slightest attention to me, though once his eyes, with a dreadful glitter in them, stared at me and through me. Then he began to laugh, hardly and discordantly, and my first thought was that he'd gone mad. Such things have happened before in the back of beyond. Then he stopped laughing, and stared at me again.

"Mark Danver, isn't it?" he croaked. "Well, sit down, Mr. Mark Danver, and don't dare to move, or I'll plug you as full of lead as a mine. Because I've been telling you lies—packs and packs of rotten damned lies—and you've got to hear the truth. I've told you, haven't I, that there was a girl in England of surpassing beauty? I was engaged to her, Danver, that wonderful girl. I was going to marry her, Danver, and she was going to come out here and live with me. I've shown you her photograph, haven't I?" He stared at me, and his head nodded a little. "Speak, damn you, speak!"

"Yes, Jack, you've shown me her photograph," I said, quietly.

"Well, if you look behind you on the wall you can see it a second time."

I looked over my shoulder and saw the frame nailed to the wall. He'd been shooting at it with his revolver, and more than one bullet had gone clean through the picture.

"That's what it's worth, Mr. Danver. That's all that rotten girl is worth. I've put five shots through her, and there's one left here for me." He laughed again discordantly, and began muttering to himself "'A fool there was, and he made his prayer.'"

"You haven't told me yet, Jack, what's happened," I said, steadily. At all costs I had to calm him sufficiently to get his revolver away from him, and to do that I wanted to get close to him without making him suspicious. Jack Onslow was mad right enough, but only with drink, for he was usually an abstemious boy.

"Haven't I told you?" he snarled. "What a regrettable oversight! Well, I'll tell you now. This wonderful girl of mine has married another man. It's all quite in order; they've put it in the *Times*, and if you come round here you can see the announcement."

It was what I was waiting for, and I crossed the room to his side. I didn't look at the *Times*—that could wait; but I caught his right wrist. He wasn't expecting it, and anyway I was a stronger man than he. And the next instant I'd slipped his revolver into my pocket.

He sprang to his feet, and for a moment or two I thought he was going to strike me. And then, quite suddenly, came the change. After all he was but a boy. He just crumpled up in his chair and, putting his arms on the table, he laid his head on them and sobbed like a little child. No—that is not right, for a child's tears are as a passing shower. And Jack Onslow sobbed as a man sobs, and there is no more dreadful sound in all this world. But I knew the danger was over.

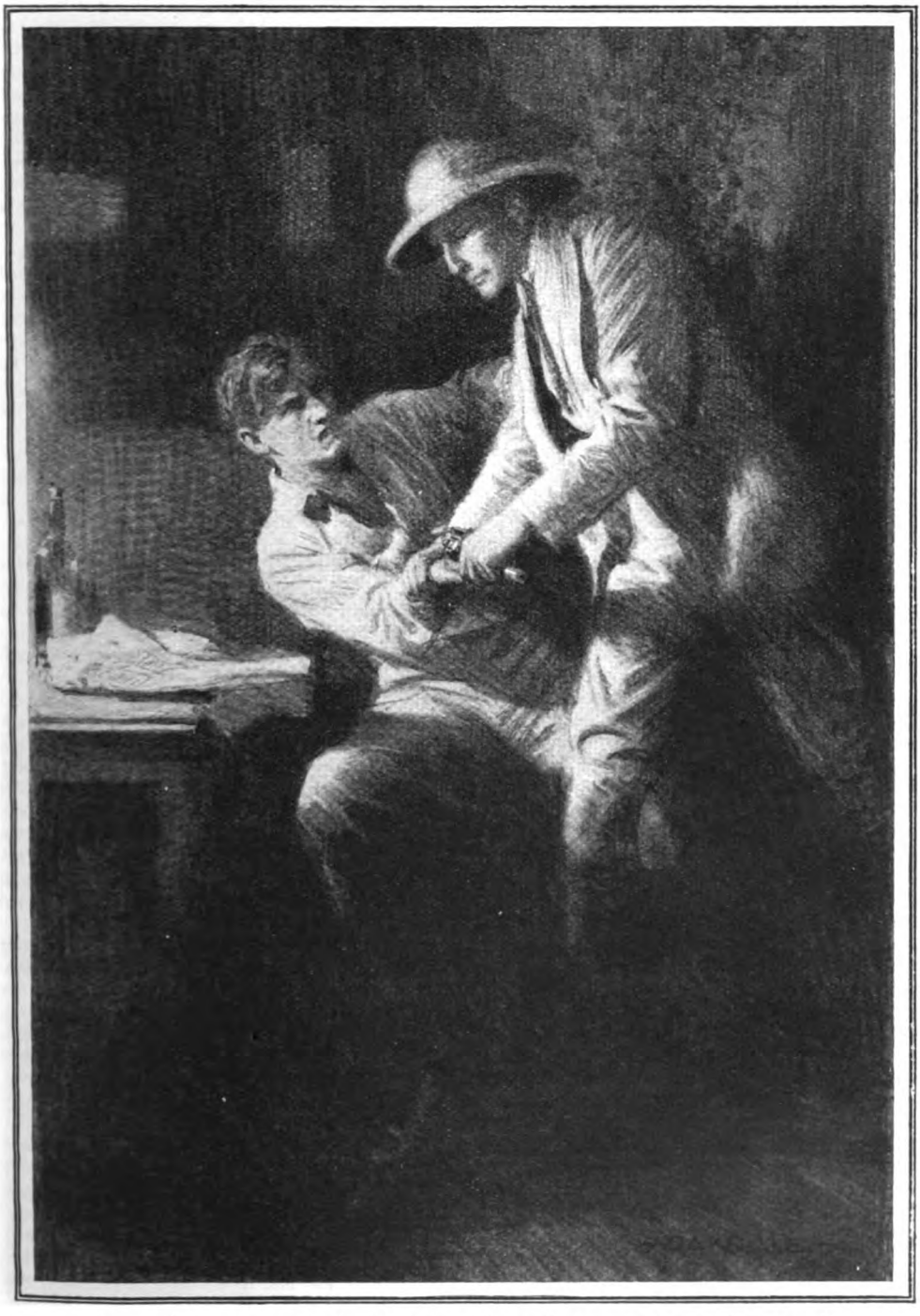
After a while he grew silent. Only a deep shuddering breath every now and then told me he was conscious: except for that he was motionless in his exhaustion. And my heart bled for the boy.

I had seen the announcement in the *Times*—scored and scored again by Jack with a thick blue pencil:—

> *Dryden: Carstairs.—On the 5th May, at the Old Parish Church, Okehampton, Herbert Dryden to Joan Carstairs, only daughter of Captain Carstairs, late of Royal Navy.*

And I marvelled in my mind that such a girl as she had seemed to me from her picture could do such a thing.

At length his breathing grew quieter, and he slept. I didn't touch him or disturb him; it was better to let Nature have her way. Through all the dreary months ahead he'd have to suffer; let him sleep now and forget. So I left him there with the letter still clutched in his hand. And when he woke the African night had come down and the lamps were lit.



I crossed the room, caught his right wrist, and the next instant I'd slipped his revolver into my pocket.

He sat up and stared at me dazedly across the table. Memory hadn't come back; he didn't realize what had happened. And then he saw the letter in his hand, and his face went haggard.

"I've been asleep, Mark?" he asked.

"Yes, old chap," I said, "you've been asleep. I want you to eat some dinner now."

He shook his head.

"It was that whisky," he said, slowly. "I've been mad. Did I say some terrible things, Mark, about Joan?"

He steadied his voice well—remarkably well—as he said her name.

"Whatever you may have said, Jack," I said, putting my hand on his shoulder, "it was only I who heard you. And when a man's lowered a bottle of whisky neat, only a fool pays any attention to what he says."

He looked at me, and his eyes were tired.

"Dear old Mark," he said, "I think you saved my life. It's in here"—he touched his forehead—"like a bad dream—all that happened after you came in. But what I want you to understand, old man, is that it's not her fault. It's not one little bit Joan's fault. It's all in her letter here. You see, this man Dryden had her father in his power. Something about money it was; dear old Carstairs is the biggest fool in the world over money. And he threatened to ruin him and her mother unless she married him." He shook his fists suddenly in the air, and the sweat glistened on his forehead. "Great God!" he shouted, "what a swine that man must be!" Then he pulled himself together again and went on quietly: "So, you see, she couldn't help it—my little girl. She couldn't see her father and mother made penniless beggars, could she? So she sacrificed herself for them. It's all down here in the letter."

"Confound it all," I snapped, "it seems to me she sacrificed you as well."

For a moment his shoulder shook and he turned away. Then he steadied himself, and I went out on to the veranda. I wasn't in the mood to hear any more excuses about the girl; to me the big tragedy was the one at hand—that priceless boy. And then I heard his voice again, and looked back into the room.

He was standing by the photograph and I think he'd forgotten my existence for the moment, or else he thought I'd gone into the compound. But as he took it down from the wall he spoke.

"Forgive me, my darling. I couldn't help it. I was mad. But I understand. Joan; I understand now."

And, damn it, Dick, I couldn't have spoken at that moment if my life had depended on it.

THAT'S the first part of my confession, old man. You will probably say to yourself that up to now there's been nothing to confess. Quite right; but I had to put it down in detail so that you should know the terms I was on with Jack Onslow. He was a pal of mine—almost as great a pal as you yourself, save that he was a younger man. I want to make that clear; I want to emphasize it, for it has a big bearing on what is to come.

I suppose it was a month later that I left Jack. He was still carrying on, but all the spring had gone out of his work. Only once did he allude to the girl, and that was the night before I left.

"What's the use, Mark?" he said, with an odd twisted smile. "I was doing it for her, and now, what's the use?"

The next day I left him. I was going back to England, and I remember looking back as the road turned for a last view of the farm. Jack was standing on the veranda and he waved his hand once. Then he went inside, and I pictured him sitting at the table staring in front of him with hopeless eyes.

"What's the use, Mark; what's the use?"

His words were echoing in my brain, and as I rode on I made up my mind that when opportunity offered I would seek out Mrs. Dryden and I would paint a picture for her which she would not forget in a hurry. I would tell this girl exactly what the salvation of her father had meant to Jack Onslow. And it was three months later that I arrived in Okehampton with the intention of looking for her.

Of course, I had no idea where she was living, but since the wedding had taken place there I thought I should be able to get the information I wanted. And I was right; the first person I asked at one of the hotels told me where they lived. Then he looked at me a bit curiously.

"Do you know him—Herbert Dryden?"

"No," I said, briefly, "I don't. What sort of a man is he?"

"You'll see for yourself," he answered, and I couldn't get any more out of him. But his tone of voice spoke volumes.

And as I ate my lunch I reflected that she deserved all she got; my mind was still sore over Jack.

I'm not going to weary you with a long account of how I got to know Dryden. It was through Brayfield, a major in the Gunners who was in camp there, as a matter

of fact. I'd known him in the past, and he asked me up to dine one guest-night. And Dryden was there—a thin-lipped, austere-looking man of about fifty. His face seemed to be set in a continual sneer, and his eyes were cold and fishy. I remember I asked Brayfield about him, and he shrugged his shoulders.

" He's exactly what he looks like," he remarked. " Personally, I think he's one of the most horrible swine I've ever met in my life, and how he ever induced his wife to marry him is one of those things which are beyond human comprehension."

" What sort of a girl is she ? " I asked, carelessly.

" Well, I don't think I'm exaggerating," he answered, quietly, " when I say that she is the sweetest and most lovely woman I've ever seen in my life. And," he finished up savagely, " he treats her like a dog. By the way, you paint, don't you ? "

" I dabble in it," I said, rather surprised at the question.

" So does he," answered Brayfield. " I'll introduce you to him after dinner, and he's sure to ask you up to his house. And then you can see his wife for yourself."

IT fell out as he said. Dryden, it appeared, was inordinately proud of his water-colours, and liked nothing better than to show them to an appreciative audience. And since I wanted to get to the house I exaggerated my ability somewhat.

I went up the next day to lunch. It was a big house, standing in rather a lonely position. The grounds were well kept and extensive, and it was evident that Dryden had money. And a woman who could chuck Jack and marry Dryden for money must be pretty rotten. I'm afraid I didn't pay too much attention to the ruined father stunt ; in fact, I had almost forgotten it. All I could think of was Jack sobbing his soul out as the night came down on his farm in Uganda.

And then I saw the girl. You know her, Dick, so I won't bore you with trying to describe her. But all I could realize at the moment when I saw her picking some flowers in the garden was that Brayfield had understated the case. She had on a cotton frock—I can remember it as if it were yesterday—and when she saw me she put down her basket and came towards me.

" How do you do ? " she said, holding out her hand. " My husband will be here in a moment."

I stood there, Dick, like a callow schoolboy gaping at her, and then, moved by some uncontrollable impulse, I blurted out what was in my mind.

" Why, in Heaven's name, have you smashed Jack Onslow's life ? "

For a moment I thought she was going to fall. Every vestige of colour left her face and she swayed dizzily. Then she pulled herself together, and I heard her agonized whisper :—

" Don't mention it before my husband, for God's sake ! "

I heard a step behind me on the gravel, and turned round to find Dryden approaching. By day he looked even more unpleasant than at night, and it was with a feeling almost of repugnance that I took his hand.

" I see you have introduced each other," he remarked, suavely. " Mr. Danver is interested in painting, Joan ; and—what should appeal to you more—he has been in Uganda."

Every word came out like a drop of iced water, and he was watching her as a cat watches a mouse.

She was superb.

" Indeed ! " she said. " How interesting ! It must be a most fascinating country."

She led the way towards the house, and we followed. Every hard thought I'd had about her had vanished—just been blotted out. I knew that it wasn't her fault—that Jack had been right. Knowing her as you do you'll understand my sudden conversion. All I knew and felt for certain was that some damnable tragedy had taken place, and that this fish-eyed brute was at the bottom of it.

I wish I could give you some idea of the devilish way he treated that wonderful, glorious girl. At lunch that day, for instance, he wouldn't keep off the subject of Uganda ; asked me if by any chance I knew a man called Jack Onslow ; hoped that he was in the best of health and spirits ; trusted that he would marry some nice girl soon. And all the time his eyes were fixed on his wife—searching her face to see if his shots had got home. And I, fool that I was, had added to her burden by telling her that she'd smashed Jack's life.

Not by a quiver of an eyelid did she let her husband see that he'd scored. She sat there calm-eyed and disdainful, and I was torn between a desire to cry : " Well played, you topping girl," and a positive craving to hit the swine in the face.

She disappeared after lunch, and Dryden bored me with his rotten paintings. I escaped as soon as I could ; I felt I couldn't bear the man any longer. And I wanted to see the girl again, and tell her that Jack was all right and that he understood. But there was no sign of her about the garden, and with a sick feeling of impotence I walked out over the moors. I felt I wanted to get

She pulled herself together, and I heard her agonized whisper: "Don't mention it before my husband, for God's sake!"

away into the open, and try to get the taste of Dryden out of my mouth.

And then quite suddenly and unexpectedly I came on her. She was sitting down in a little hollow, and a terrier was at her feet. She stared at me as I came up, and the hopeless misery in her eyes made me catch my breath.

" So I've smashed his life, have I ? " she said at length.

I sat down beside her on the grass.

" He's better now, Mrs. Dryden," I answered, gently. " But I was with him when the news came—and he took it hard. Tell me—why did you do it ? "

And then little by little the whole story came out. She wasn't very clear on the business points involved, but I gathered that it was concerned with a mortgage. Her father had speculated—led on, as she found out later, by Dryden. Then he had mortgaged his house and Dryden had taken it up—only to threaten to foreclose a month or two later. It was utterly impossible to find the money, and Dryden's price for not foreclosing was—her.

She had told him everything—gone down on her knees to him, but it was useless. He had wanted her for years, and her love for Jack Onslow was nothing to him. He wanted her for his wife, and he was going to have her for his wife. Otherwise utter absolute ruin for her mother and father. That was the choice he gave her.

" You heard him at lunch to-day, Mr. Danver," she said, and her voice was trembling. " It's always the same. I believe he hates me ; hates me because I won't pretend what I can't feel. I know I hate him, and though he forced me to marry him, he can't force me to love him. There will never be anybody in my life but Jack. And if "—the tears were running down her cheeks—" if you see him again, will you tell him so ? Tell him that Tim and I come out here and talk about him." She laid her hand on the dog's head. " Tim is his dog, you know."

I bit at my pipe, Dick, and sat there like a tongue-tied fool.

" Don't tell him I'm miserable, because that would make him miserable too. But don't tell him I'm happy, Mr. Danver, because I couldn't bear him to think I could be happy tied to Herbert."

" But look here, Mrs. Dryden," I cried, " why go on like this ? A man who could drive such an abominable bargain as your husband has doesn't deserve the slightest consideration. Write to Jack, and tell him to come home and take you away with him back to Uganda. It would be less wrong than going on as you are."

She gave a little pitiful smile.

" Three days after we were married, Herbert informed me that he still held the mortgage, and that should I be foolish enough to contemplate leaving his roof the question of foreclosing would again arise. He also stated that he was unalterably opposed to divorce."

And then she fell to asking me about Jack : how he was looking ; how the farm was doing ; all the little intimate details a woman wants to know about her man. Who looked after his clothes—of all things—God bless her. As if I knew.

And at last, after about an hour, she rose.

" Good-bye, Mr. Danver," she said. " I think if you don't mind I'd sooner not see you again."

" I'm going to-morrow," I answered. " And if I see Jack I'll tell him."

She gave a little choking cry and was gone, stumbling over the rough ground, with Tim scampering round her feet. And having watched her out of sight I turned and strode away over the moor. I felt I'd like to hit somebody or something ; I felt that life could hold no more wonderful joy than ten minutes alone with Herbert Dryden and a rhinoceros-hide whip. And at that moment, Dick, I saw him.

SOMETIMES now I think it was Fate's inexorable decree ; sometimes now I think that it was intended from the beginning of things. And then, at others, I lie sweating in the night and wonder. You know that they brought it in as an accident. You know that he was found with his head crushed in at the bottom of Dead Man's Pool, with his easel and his camp-stool on the edge of the cliff two hundred feet above. You know that at the inquest I gave evidence to the effect that I had seen him stand up with his pencil in his hand as if to take some measurements, and suddenly stumble and disappear into the depths below. And they brought it in as a sudden attack of vertigo.

It was a lie, Dick ; I murdered him. I killed Herbert Dryden that evening at Dead Man's Pool, and I leave the verdict in your hands.

He saw me coming towards him and he waved his hand.

" Having a look round for some local colour ? " he cried. " Well, you won't find a better place to start than this. I've done it half-a-dozen times and the light is never the same."

I stood by his side in silence, watching him work. For an amateur he wasn't at all bad, and had he been anybody else I should have been interested. It was an ideal spot for a sketch, with some wonderful colour effects. Deep down below us lay

the sheet of black water—sombre and sunless—with the sinister name earned from tragedies of the past. Once, presumably, an old quarry, now it was disused, and the local people avoided it.

There were stories told about it: one in particular of a hard-riding, hard-living squire of a bygone day, whose horse had bolted with him and gone over the edge. And it was said that the great shout of "Gone away" which he gave as he realized that he'd come to the last fence, and was falling like a stone into the depths below, could sometimes now be heard echoing faintly over the moors.

The top of the quarry lay in a little depression, so that we were at the bottom of a saucer, so to speak. And for a while I watched him getting in the wonderful yellow of the broom on the opposite side of the pool. He worked in silence, his fishy eyes absorbed in their task, until suddenly he put down his brush and looked at me.

"So you know Jack Onslow," he said, with an ugly smile. "Tell me about the young swine."

It was then that something snapped, Dick; up to that moment I swear I had no thought of what I was going to do. But in my brain I could see only two pictures—Jack sobbing his soul out across the table, and this fish-eyed brute gloating in front of me.

But I didn't do anything rashly; to this day I can remember how ice-cold and clear my mind felt.

"I think it should interest you, Mr. Dryden," I remarked, "to know that one of the last times I saw Jack Onslow, he was mad drunk on a bottle of whisky. He had a photograph nailed to the wall of his bungalow, and he was firing at it with his revolver. And the photograph was of your wife."

I took one quick look round: there was no soul in sight. And then I picked up a huge stone lying at my feet. There was just time to see the unholy joy on his face turn to a fearful terror—but no more. I brought the stone down on his head with all my force, and he fell over the edge like a log. I heard the crash as he hit the rock below, and then he toppled into the pool. Finally I threw the stone far out into the water, picked up his camp-stool, which had fallen over, and went straight back and gave the alarm.

The result you know; there was no known motive in my killing him; there was never even any suspicion of it. It was an accident—and as such it has remained to this day.

But now, old Dick, as my own last fence is looming in sight, it haunts me sometimes. Was I justified in doing such a thing? Can anyone ever be justified in doing such a thing? When I can't sleep o' nights, I see those eyes of his staring at me out of the darkness—and they mock me. They seem to say: "You're coming too, Mark Danver; you, who dared to judge me."

But it wasn't for myself, Dick, that I did it—that much I can say. It was for Jack and that wonderful girl. And when those eyes of his get very bad there's another picture comes to my mind, and the eyes fade away. I see again Jack's farm, with Jack standing on the veranda. On his face is a look of dawning wonder, as he stares at the girl standing beside him. Just once he passes his hand across his eyes, and I hear him whisper: "Dear heavens! but I'm dreaming."

And then she goes to him and her arms are round his neck.

"Not dreaming, my darling—it's truth. It's all come right at last."

At that I leave it. They must never know, Dick; they must never have an inkling that it was not an accident. But now that I'm going I've written this to you in case anything ever happens. It's not likely to, so long after, but it might. And if it did—you know.

The final punishment will lie in other hands, though it's begun already. These last few years have been hell. That's why I've buried myself and cut adrift from you all. You see, I loved her too, as I never believed I could have loved a woman. That's another thing they must never know.

Good-bye, old chap.

FOR a while I sat staring across the sunlit garden. On the lawn young Jack was being instructed in the rudiments of cricket by his father, while his mother kept wicket. And even more did I marvel at the strangeness of the coincidence that had brought Mark's letter to me in this of all houses.

At last the game was over, and young Jack departed with his nurse. And as they watched him go I saw Jack Onslow turn to the girl at his side. For a moment he looked at her as a man may look at only one woman, and she gave a little happy laugh. Yes—it's all come right at last, dear old Mark—it's all come right.

A DEAL IN OLD MASTERS

by

ALDOUS HUXLEY

Illustrated by C. E. Brock, R.I., and S. Abbey.

"PICTURES," said Mr. Bigger; "you want to see some pictures? Well, we have a very interesting mixed exhibition of modern stuff in our galleries at the moment. French and English, you know."

The customer held up his hand, shook his head. "No, no. Nothing modern for me," he declared, in his pleasant northern English. "I want real pictures, old pictures. Rembrandt and Sir Joshua Reynolds and that sort of thing."

"Perfectly." Mr. Bigger nodded. 'Old Masters. Oh, of course we deal in the old as well as the modern."

"The fact is," said the other, "that I've just bought a rather large house—a Manor House," he added, in impressive tones.

Mr. Bigger smiled; there was an ingenuousness about this simple-minded fellow which was most engaging. He wondered how the man had made his money. "A Manor House." The way he had said it was really charming. Here was a man who had worked his way up from serfdom to the lordship of a manor, from the broad base of the feudal pyramid to the narrow summit. His own history and all the history of classes had been implicit in that awed proud emphasis on the "Manor." But the stranger was running on; Mr. Bigger could not allow his thoughts to wander farther. "In a house of this style," he was saying, "and with a position like mine to keep up, one must have a few pictures. Old Masters, you know; Rembrandts and What's-his-names."

"Of course," said Mr. Bigger, "an Old Master is a symbol of social superiority."

"That's just it," cried the other, beaming; "you've said just what I wanted to say."

Mr. Bigger bowed and smiled. It was delightful to find someone who took one's little ironies as sober seriousness.

"Of course, we should only need Old Masters downstairs, in the reception-room. It would be too much of a good thing to have them in the bedrooms too."

"Altogether too much of a good thing," Mr. Bigger assented.

"As a matter of fact," the Lord of the Manor went on, "my daughter—she does a bit of sketching. And very pretty it is. I'm having some of her things framed to hang in the bedrooms. It's useful having an artist in the family. Saves you buying pictures. But, of course, we must have something old downstairs."

"I think I have exactly what you want." Mr. Bigger got up and rang the bell. "My daughter does a little sketching"—he pictured a large blonde barmaidish personage, thirty-one and not yet married, running a bit to seed. His secretary appeared at the door. "Bring me the Venetian portrait, Miss Pratt, the one in the back room. You know which I mean."

"You're very snug in here," said the Lord of the Manor. "Business good, I hope."

Mr. Bigger sighed. "The slump," he said. "We art dealers feel it worse than anyone."

"Ah, the slump." The Lord of the Manor chuckled. "I foresaw it all the time. Some people seemed to think the good times were going to last for ever. What fools! I sold out of everything at the crest of the wave. That's why I can buy pictures now."

Mr. Bigger laughed too. This was the right sort of customer. "Wish I'd had anything to sell out during the boom," he said.

The Lord of the Manor laughed till the tears rolled down his cheeks. He was still laughing when Miss Pratt re-entered the room. She carried a picture, shieldwise, in her two hands, before her.

"Put it on the easel, Miss Pratt," said Mr. Bigger. "Now," he turned to the Lord of the Manor, "what do you think of that?"

The picture that stood on the easel before them was a half-length portrait. Plump-faced, white-skinned, high-bosomed in her deeply scalloped dress of blue silk, the

subject of the picture seemed a typical Italian lady of the middle eighteenth century. A little complacent smile curved the pouting lips and in one hand she held a black mask, as though she had just taken it off after a day of carnival.

"Very nice," said the Lord of the Manor; but he added, doubtfully, "it isn't very like Rembrandt, is it? It's all so clear and bright. Generally in Old Masters you can never see anything at all, they're so dark and foggy."

"Very true," said Mr. Bigger. "But not all Old Masters are like Rembrandt."

"I suppose not." The Lord of the Manor seemed hardly to be convinced.

"This is eighteenth-century Venetian Their colour was always luminous. Giangolini was the painter. He died young, you know. Not more than half-a-dozen of his pictures are known. And this is one."

The Lord of the Manor nodded. He could appreciate the value of rarity.

"One notices at a first glance the influence of Longhi," Mr. Bigger went on, airily. "And there is something of the morbidezza of Rosalba in the painting of the face."

The Lord of the Manor was looking uncomfortably from Mr. Bigger to the picture and from the picture to Mr. Bigger. There is nothing so embarrassing as to be talked at by someone possessing more knowledge than you do. Mr. Bigger pressed his advantage.

"Curious," he went on, "that one sees nothing of Tiepolo's manner in this. Don't you think so?"

The Lord of the Manor nodded. His face wore a gloomy expression. The corners of his baby's mouth drooped. One almost expected him to burst into tears.

"It's pleasant," said Mr. Bigger, relenting at last, "to talk to somebody who really knows about painting. So few people do."

"Well, I can't say I've ever gone into the subject very deeply," said the Lord of the Manor, modestly. "But I know what I like when I see it." His face brightened again, as he felt himself on safer ground.

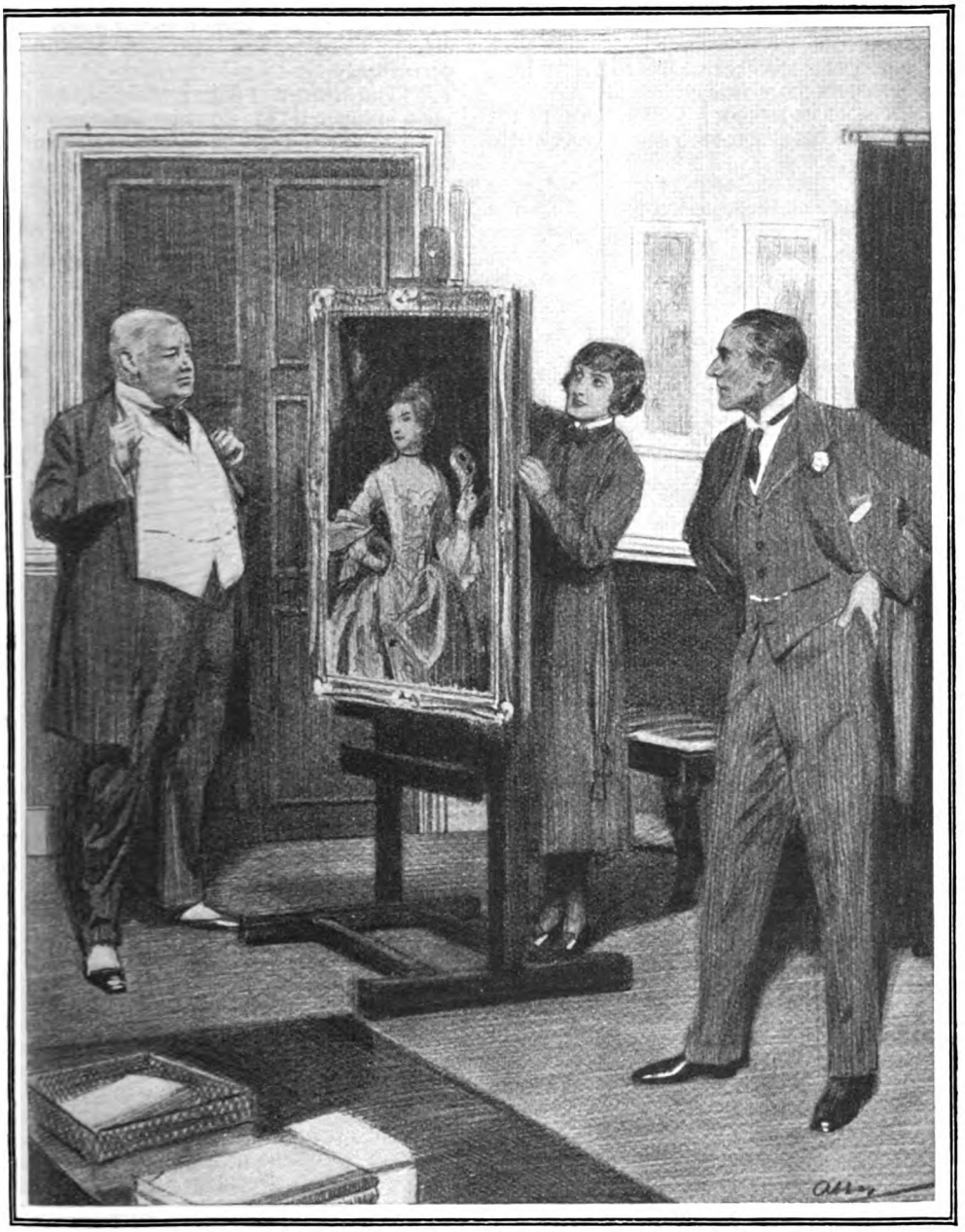
"A natural instinct," said Mr. Bigger. "That's a very precious gift. I could see by your face that you had it; I could see that the moment you came into the gallery."

The Lord of the Manor was delighted. "Really now," he said. He felt himself growing larger, more important. "Really." He cocked his head critically on one side. "Yes. I must say I think that's a very fine bit of painting. Very fine. But the fact is, I should rather have liked a more historical piece, if you know what I mean. Something more ancestor-like, you know. A portrait of somebody with a story—like Anne Boleyn, or Nell Gwynn, or the Duke of Wellington, or someone like that."

"But, my dear sir, I was just going to tell you. This picture has a story." Mr. Bigger leaned forward and tapped the Lord of the Manor on the knee. His eyes twinkled with benevolent and amused brightness under his bushy eyebrows. There was a knowing kindliness in his smile. "A most remarkable story is connected with the painting of that picture."

"You don't say so?" The Lord of the Manor raised his eyebrows.

MR. BIGGER leaned back in his chair. "The lady you see there," he said, indicating the portrait with a wave of the hand, "was the wife of the fourth Earl Hurtmore. The family is now extinct. The ninth Earl died only last year. I got this picture when the house was sold up. It's sad to see the passing of these old ancestral homes." Mr. Bigger sighed. The Lord of the Manor looked solemn, as though he were in church. There was a moment's silence; then Mr. Bigger went on in a changed tone. "From his portraits, which I have seen, the fourth Earl seems to have been a long-faced, gloomy, grey-looking fellow. One can never imagine him young; he was the sort of man who looks permanently fifty. His chief interests in life were music and Roman antiquities. There's one portrait of him holding an ivory flute in one hand and resting the other on a fragment of Roman carving. He spent at least half his life travelling in Italy, looking for antiques and listening to music. When he was about fifty-five, he suddenly decided that it was about time to get married. This was the lady of his choice." Mr. Bigger pointed to the picture. "His money and his title must have made up for many deficiencies. One can't imagine, from her appearance, that Lady Hurtmore took a great deal of interest in Roman antiquities. Nor, I should think, did she care much for the science and history of music. She liked clothes, she liked society, she liked gambling, she liked flirting, she liked enjoying herself. It doesn't seem that the newly-wedded couple got on too well. But still, they avoided an open breach. A year after the marriage Lord Hurtmore decided to pay another visit to Italy. They reached Venice in the early autumn. For Lord Hurtmore, Venice meant unlimited music. It meant Galuppi's daily concerts at the orphanage of the Misericordia. It meant Piccini at Santa Maria. It meant new operas at the San Moise; it meant delicious cantatas at a hundred churches. It meant private concerts of amateurs; it meant Porpora and the finest



"Put it on the easel, Miss Pratt. Now," he turned to the Lord of the Manor, "what do you think of that?"

singers in Europe; it meant Tartini and the greatest violinists. For Lady Hurtmore, Venice meant something rather different. It meant gambling at the Ridotto, masked balls, gay supper parties—all the delights of the most amusing city in the world. Living their separate lives, both might have been happy here in Venice almost indefinitely. But one day Lord Hurtmore had the disastrous idea of having his wife's portrait painted. Young Giangolini was recommended to him as the promising, the coming painter. Lady Hurtmore began her sittings. Giangolini was handsome and dashing,

Giangolini was young. He had an amorous technique as perfect as his artistic technique. Lady Hurtmore would have been more than human if she had been able to resist him. She was not more than human."

"None of us are, eh?" The Lord of the Manor dug his finger into Mr. Bigger's ribs and laughed.

Politely, Mr. Bigger joined in his mirth; when it had subsided, he went on. "In the end they decided to run away together across the border. They would live at Vienna—live on the Hurtmore family jewels, which the lady would be careful to pack in her suit-case. They were worth upwards of twenty thousand, the Hurtmore jewels; and in Vienna, under Maria-Theresa, one could live handsomely on the interest of twenty thousand.

"The arrangements were easily made. Giangolini had a friend who did everything for them—got them passports under an assumed name, hired horses to be in waiting on the mainland, placed his gondola at their disposal. They decided to flee on the day of the last sitting. The day came. Lord Hurtmore, according to his usual custom, brought his wife to Giangolini's studio in a gondola, left her there, perched on the high-backed model's throne, and went off again to listen to Galuppi's concert at the Misericordia. It was the time of full carnival. Even in broad daylight people went about in masks. Lady Hurtmore wore one of black silk—you see her holding it, there, in the portrait. Her husband, though he was no reveller and disapproved of carnival junketings, preferred to conform to the grotesque fashion of his neighbours rather than attract attention to himself by not conforming.

"The long black cloak, the huge three-cornered black hat, the long-nosed mask of white paper were the ordinary attire of every Venetian gentleman in these carnival weeks. Lord Hurtmore did not care to be conspicuous; he wore the same. There must have been something richly absurd and incongruous in the spectacle of this grave and solemn-faced English milord dressed in the clown's uniform of a gay Venetian masker. 'Pantaloon in the clothes of Pulcinella,' was how the lovers described him to one another; the old dotard of the eternal comedy dressed up as the clown. Well, this morning, as I have said, Lord Hurtmore came as usual in his hired gondola, bringing his lady with him. And she in her turn was bringing, under the folds of her capacious cloak, a little leather box wherein, snug on their silken bed, reposed the Hurtmore jewels. Seated in the dark little cabin of the gondola they watched the churches, the richly fretted palazzi, the high mean houses gliding past them. From under his Punch's mask Lord Hurtmore's voice spoke gravely, slowly, imperturbably.

"'The learned Father Martini,' he said, 'has promised to do me the honour of coming to dine with us to-morrow. I doubt if any man knows more of musical history than he. I will ask you to be at pains to do him special honour.'

"'You may be sure I will, my lord.' She could hardly contain the laughing excitement that bubbled up within her. To-morrow at dinner-time she would be far away—over the frontier, beyond Gorizia, galloping along the Vienna road. Poor old Pantaloon! But no, she wasn't in the least sorry for him. After all, he had his music, he had his odds and ends of broken marble. Under her cloak she clutched the jewel-case more tightly. How intoxicatingly amusing her secret was!"

MR. BIGGER clasped his hands and pressed them dramatically over his heart. He was enjoying himself. He turned his long, foxy nose towards the Lord of the Manor, and smiled benevolently. The Lord of the Manor for his part was all attention.

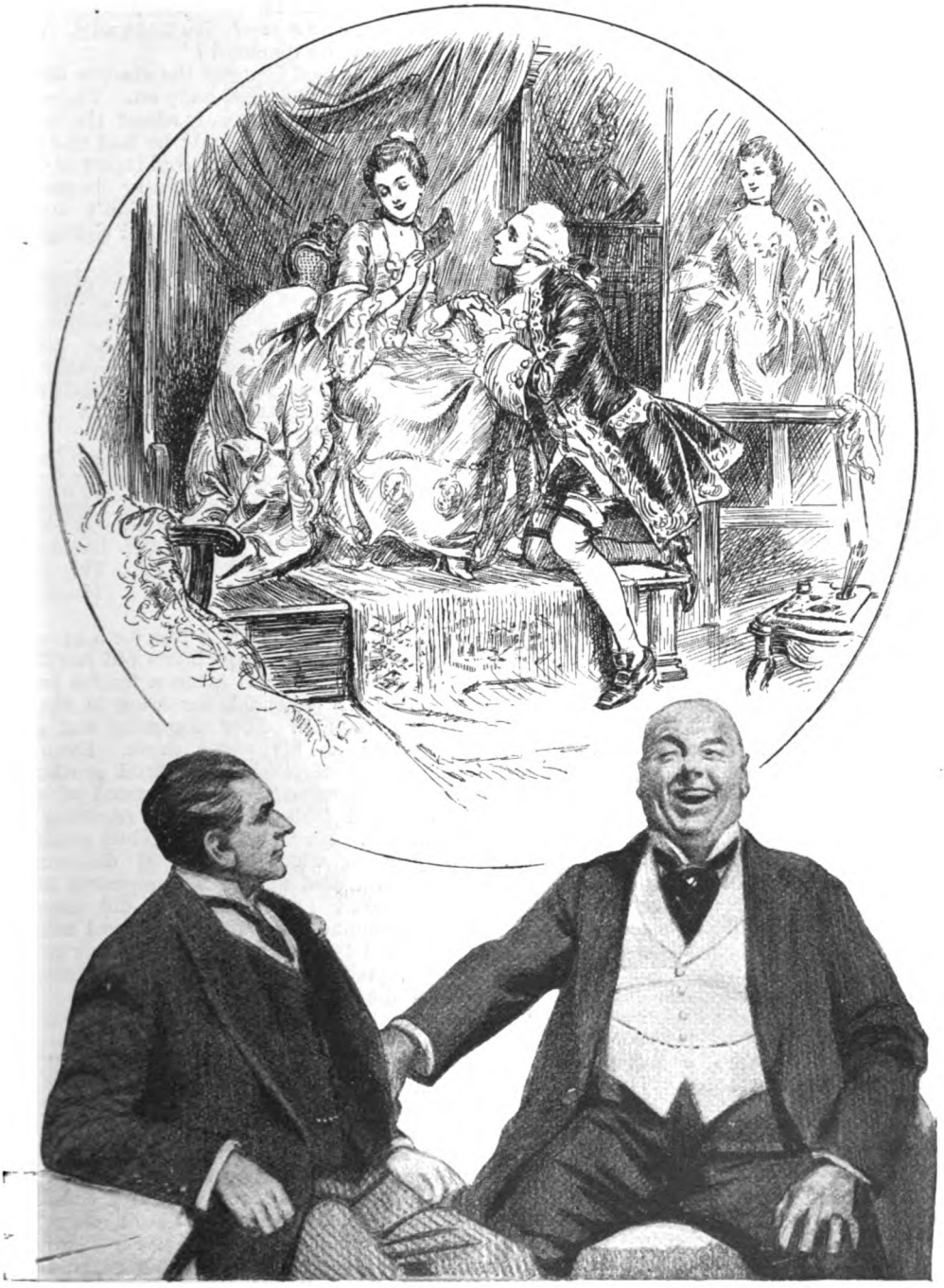
"Well?" he inquired.

Mr. Bigger unclasped his hands, and let them fall on to his knees.

"Well," he said, "the gondola draws up at Giangolini's door, Lord Hurtmore helps his wife out, leads her up to the painter's great room on the first floor, commits her into his charge with his usual polite formula, and then goes off to hear Galuppi's morning concert at the Misericordia. The lovers have a good two hours to make their final preparations.

"Old Pantaloon safely out of sight, up pops the painter's useful friend, masked and cloaked like everyone else in the streets and on the canals of this carnival Venice. There follow embracements and handshakings and laughter all round; everything has been so marvellously successful, not a suspicion roused. From under Lady Hurtmore's cloak comes the jewel-case. She opens it, and there are loud Italian exclamations of astonishment and admiration. The brilliants, the pearls, the great Hurtmore emeralds, the ruby clasps, the diamond earrings—all these bright, glittering things are lovingly examined, knowingly handled. Fifty thousand sequins at the least is the estimate of the useful friend. The two lovers throw themselves ecstatically into one another's arms.

"The useful friend interrupts them; there are still a few last things to be done. They must go and sign for their passports



"Lady Hurtmore would have been more than human if she had been able to resist him. She was not more than human."

"None of us are, eh?" The Lord of the Manor dug his finger into Mr. Bigger's ribs and laughed.

at the Ministry of Police. Oh, a mere formality; but still it has to be done. He will go out at the same time and sell one of the lady's diamonds to provide the necessary funds for the journey."

Mr. Bigger paused to light a cigarette. He blew a cloud of smoke, and went on.

"So they set out, all in their masks and capes, the useful friend in one direction, the painter and his mistress in another. Ah, love in Venice!" Mr. Bigger turned up his eyes in ecstasy. "Have you ever been in Venice and in love, sir?" he inquired of the Lord of the Manor.

"Never farther than Dieppe," said the Lord of the Manor, shaking his head.

"Ah, then you've missed one of life's great experiences. You can never fully and completely understand what must have been the sensations of little Lady Hurtmore and the ar ist as they glided down the long canals, gazing at one another through the eye-holes of their masks. Sometimes, perhaps, they kissed—though it would have been difficult to do that without unmasking, and there was always the danger that someone might have recognized their naked faces through the windows of their little cabin. No, on the whole," Mr. Bigger concluded, reflectively, "I expect they confined themselves to looking at one another. But in Venice, drowsing along the canals, one can almost be satisfied with looking—just looking."

He caressed the air with his hand and let his voice droop away into silence. He took two or three puffs at his cigarette without saying anything. When he went on, his voice was very quiet and even.

"ABOUT half an hour after they had gone, a gondola drew up at Giangolini's door and a man in a paper mask, wrapped in a black cloak and wearing on his head the inevitable three-cornered hat, got out and went upstairs to the painter's room. It was empty. The portrait smiled sweetly and a little fatuously from the easel. But no painter stood before it and the model's throne was untenanted. The long-nosed mask looked about the room with an expressionless curiosity. The wandering glance came to rest at last on the jewel-case that stood where the lovers had carelessly left it, open on the table. Deep-set and darkly shadowed behind the grotesque mask, the eyes dwelt long and fixedly on this object. Long-nosed Pulcinella seemed to be wrapt in meditation.

"A few minutes later there was the sound of footsteps on the stairs, of two voices laughing together. The masker turned away to look out of the window. Behind him the door opened noisily; drunk with excitement, with gay laughable irresponsibility, the lovers burst in.

"'Aha, *caro amico!* Back already. What luck with the diamond?'

"The cloaked figure at the window did not stir; Giangolini rattled gaily on. There had been no trouble whatever about the signatures, no questions asked; he had the passports in his pocket. They could start at once.

"Lady Hurtmore suddenly began to laugh uncontrollably; she couldn't stop.

"'What's the matter?' asked Giangolini, laughing too.

"'I was thinking,' she gasped between the paroxysms of her mirth, 'I was thinking of old Pantalone sitting at the Misericordia, solemn as an owl, listening'—she almost choked, and the words came out shrill and forced as though she were speaking through tears—'listening to old Galuppi's boring old cantatas.'

"The man at the window turned round. 'Unfortunately, madam,' he said, 'the learned maestro was indisposed this morning. There was no concert.' He took off his mask. 'And so I took the liberty of returning earlier than usual.' The long, grey, unsmiling face of Lord Hurtmore confronted them.

"The lovers stared at him for a moment speechlessly. Lady Hurtmore put her hand to her heart; it had given a fearful jump, and she felt a horrible sensation in the pit of her stomach. Poor Giangolini had gone as white as his paper mask. Even in these days of *cicisbei*, of official gentlemen friends, there were cases on record of outraged and jealous husbands resorting to homicide. He was unarmed, but goodness only knew what weapons of destruction were concealed under that enigmatic black cloak. But Lord Hurtmore did nothing brutal or undignified. Gravely and calmly, as he did everything, he walked over to the table, picked up the jewel-case, closed it with the greatest care, and saying: 'My box, I think,' put it in his pocket and walked out of the room. The lovers were left looking questioningly at one another."

There was a silence.

"What happened then?" asked the Lord of the Manor.

"The anti-climax," Mr. Bigger replied, shaking his head mournfully. "Giangolini had bargained to elope with fifty thousand sequins. Lady Hurtmore didn't, on reflection, much relish the idea of love in a cottage. Woman's place, she decided at last, is in the home—with the family jewels. But would Lord Hurtmore see the matter in precisely the same light? That was the question, the alarming, disquieting question. She decided to go and see for herself.

"I took the liberty of returning earlier than usual," said Lord Hurtmore, as he took off his mask. The lovers stared at him for a moment speechlessly.
"What happened then?" asked the Lord of the Manor.

She got back just in time for dinner. 'His Illustrissimous Excellency is waiting in the dining-room,' said the major-domo. The tall doors were flung open before her; she swam in majestically, chin held high—but with what a terror in her soul! Her husband was standing by the fireplace. He advanced to meet her.

"'I was expecting you, madam,' he said, and led her to her place.

"That was the only reference he ever made to the incident. In the afternoon he sent a servant to fetch the portrait from the painter's studio. It formed part of their baggage when, a month later, they set out for England. The story has been passed

down with the picture from one generation to the next. I had it from an old friend of the family when I bought the portrait last year."

Mr. Bigger threw his cigarette end into the grate. He flattered himself that he had told that tale very well.

"Very interesting," said the Lord of the Manor, "very interesting indeed. Quite historical, isn't it? One could hardly do better with Nell Gwynn or Anne Boleyn, could one?"

Mr. Bigger smiled vaguely, distantly. He was thinking of Venice—the Russian countess staying in his pension, the tufted tree in the courtyard outside his bedroom, that strong, hot scent she used (it made you catch your breath when you first smelt it), and there was the bathing on the Lido, and the gondola, and the dome of the Salute against the hazy sky, looking just as it looked when Guardi painted it. How enormously long ago and far away it all seemed now! He was hardly more than a boy then; it had been his first great adventure. He woke up with a start from his reverie.

The Lord of the Manor was speaking. "How much now would you want for that picture?" he asked. His tone was detached, off-hand; he was a rare one for bargaining.

"Well," said Mr. Bigger, quitting with reluctance the Russian countess, the paradisaical Venice of five-and-twenty years ago, "I've asked as much as a thousand for less important works than this. But I don't mind letting this go to you for seven-fifty."

The Lord of the Manor whistled. "Seven-fifty," he repeated. "It's too much."

"But, my dear sir," Mr. Bigger protested, "think what you'd have to pay for a Rembrandt of this size and quality—twenty thousand at least. Seven hundred and fifty isn't at all too much. On the contrary, it's very little considering the importance of the picture you're getting. You have a good enough judgment to see that this is a very fine work of art."

"Oh, I'm not denying that," said the Lord of the Manor. "All I say is that seven-fifty's a lot of money. Whe-ew! I'm glad my daughter does sketching. Think if I'd had to furnish the bedrooms with pictures at seven-fifty a time!" He laughed.

Mr. Bigger smiled. "You must also remember," he said, "that you're making a very good investment. Late Venetians are going up. If I had any capital to spare ——" The door opened and Miss Pratt's blonde and frizzy head popped in.

"Mr. Crowley wants to know if he can see you, Mr. Bigger."

Mr. Bigger frowned. "Tell him to wait," he said, irritably. He coughed and turned back to the Lord of the Manor. "If I had any capital to spare, I'd put it all into late Venetians. Every penny."

He wondered, as he said the words, how often he had told people that he'd put all his capital, if he had any, into primitives, cubism, nigger sculpture, Japanese prints...

In the end the Lord of the Manor wrote him a cheque for six hundred and eighty.

"You might let me have a typewritten copy of the story," he said, as he put on his hat. "It would be a good tale to tell one's guests at dinner, don't you think? I'd like to have the details quite correct."

"Oh, of course, of course," said Mr. Bigger, "the details are most important."

He ushered the little round man to the door. "Good morning. Good morning." He was gone.

A TALL, pale youth with side whiskers appeared in the doorway. His eyes were dark and melancholy; his expression, his general appearance, were romantic and at the same time a little pitiable. It was young Crowley, the painter.

"Sorry to have kept you waiting," said Mr. Bigger. "What did you want to see me for?"

Mr. Crowley looked embarrassed, he hesitated. How he hated having to do this sort of thing! "The fact is," he said at last, "I'm horribly short of money. I wondered if perhaps you wouldn't mind—if it would be convenient to you—to pay me for that thing I did for you the other day. I'm awfully sorry to bother you like this."

"Not at all, my dear fellow." Mr. Bigger felt sorry for this wretched creature who didn't know how to look after himself. Poor young Crowley was as helpless as a baby. "How much did we settle it was to be?"

"Twenty pounds, I think it was," said Mr. Crowley, timidly.

Mr. Bigger took out his pocket-book. "We'll make it twenty-five," he said.

"Oh, no, really, I couldn't. Thanks very much." Mr. Crowley blushed like a girl. "I suppose you wouldn't like to have a show of some of my landscapes; would you?" he asked, emboldened by Mr. Bigger's air of benevolence.

"No, no. Nothing of your own." Mr. Bigger shook his head inexorably.

"There's no money in modern stuff. But I'll take any number of those sham Old Masters of yours." He drummed with his fingers on Lady Hurtmore's sleekly-painted shoulder. "Try another Venetian," he added. "This one was a great success."

A Ventriloquist's Stories by ARTHUR PRINCE

Arthur Prince and "Jim."

ILLUSTRATED BY HIGGINS.

I HAVE often thought that one of the disadvantages of living in a lunatic asylum or a workhouse must be the necessity of having to sit through some of the entertainments given by amateurs for the benefit of the inmates of those institutions. I do not say that such entertainments are always bad, but I fear that the good ones are few and far between. One of the worst I ever saw was one in which I took part.

It happened many years ago, before it had occurred to me that there might be a living in ventriloquism. At that time my great ambition was to be a conjurer. (Magic is still a hobby of mine, and I am proud of being the vice-president of the Magicians' Club.) Being a very raw amateur I naturally took every chance I could get of performing at charity bazaars, workhouses, Sunday schools, lunatic asylums, and at any other place where they would look at me.

On the occasion I have in mind the scene was a lunatic asylum. My magical turn did not get quite so much applause as I felt it deserved, but there were no actual mistakes. Then there was a song, and then a young amateur ventriloquist came on. This youth was a friend of mine, and I had promised to act as prompter to him. He seemed to have an idea that he would require a prompter, for he was suffering horribly from stage fright.

In less than two minutes it was obvious that he needed my services. With the dialogue in my hand I prompted. My friend the ventriloquist did not hear me. I spoke a little louder; still he did not hear me. Then it suddenly occurred to me that I might as well prompt ventriloquially, and I put the words into the mouth of the ventriloquist's doll.

The effect would have been better than it was if my friend had kept the mouth of his figure moving to the words, but in his excitement he forgot to do that just at first. However, presently he remembered that the doll was supposed to be speaking, and he moved its lips; he also started to remember the dialogue in places. The worst of it was that I could not be sure when his memory was going to be good and when it was not, with the result that sometimes the figure spoke with two entirely distinct voices at the same time, and at other times its lips moved most energetically but not a sound was heard.

Then the ventriloquist vigorously assaulted his figure (this was in the stage directions), and a lady in the audience rose from her seat and exclaimed:—

"Cruel! cruel!"

The medical superintendent told me afterwards that he thought—only "thought," mind you—that the dear lady was referring to the assault on the doll, but I have always had my doubts about that.

A performance at a lunatic asylum is

always rather a trying experience even at the best of times; the laughs are apt to come in the wrong places—or not at all. Not so very long ago a doctor friend of mine at an asylum asked me if I would bring "Jim" with me and give the patients a little entertainment. Afterwards I overheard some of the criticisms.

"I never saw his mouth move once," said a dear old granny (who seemed to me to be really intelligent).

"No," said her friend, "I never saw his mouth move—but I saw Jim's."

It is rather difficult to please critics of that kind.

IN my early days as a ventriloquist I thought it would be easier to win tears from an audience than to make them laugh, and I made up my mind to have a very sad, pathetic-looking doll for my entertainment. I dressed a figure up in a ragged suit, gave him a sallow complexion, and asked a candid friend to criticize.

"I should call the show 'The Channel Crossing,'" said my candid friend. "The doll looks as though he'd been through it, and was still suffering acutely—no use, old man, no good at all."

I concluded that my candid friend did not understand my business—what youngster ever welcomes real criticism of his efforts?—so I found another candid friend. This one had a commercial mind. He suggested that my doll with the pasty complexion should be used for an advertisement of a patent medicine. Scene 1. Before the cure. Scene 2. Cured (doll with a very bright, healthy complexion). The change of complexion was to be done gradually in view of the audience, and when I asked my friend how the transformation was to be worked he said:—

"Oh, I thought you were a conjurer."

I would have worked on that idea, only I was convinced that nobody would want to see the show when it was done.

Still being satisfied in my own mind that pathos was my line, I hit upon the idea of using a figure with only one arm. The little sketch was to be called "The Empty Sleeve." It seemed to be a good title; besides, "sleeve" rhymed with "grieve," and I saw myself drawing tears from the audience with the harrowing song at the end of the show.

I took this idea to a friend, who said:—

"'The Empty Sleeve' you call it? Why not call it 'The Empty Purse'? That's what yours will be if you go on like this. Why try and make people miserable?"

That I thought—and still think—was good advice, so I immediately went to the opposite extreme and invented a figure and thought of a dialogue which, I was convinced, would be a "scream."

In this sketch the figure was to be suffering from face-ache, and the right cheek was to be swollen. I contrived a very grotesque swelling, and the means of subduing it gradually during the show; that is to say, I let out the air gradually.

At the beginning of the dialogue the figure was unable to speak very plainly because of the face-ache (I saw that that would be a help!), but his speech was to improve as the swelling went down.

I tried this once at a Sunday school—only once. The swelling of the face collapsed with a bang—the rubber having burst—and the audience very kindly laughed. I didn't; I hadn't a scrap of dialogue ready for such an emergency, and my performance that evening was very brief.

After that I gave up the idea of trying to be original, and I made up my mind that I would have just an ordinary figure and collect all the old jokes I could remember, and "go in and win." At that time I used to stand up during my performance with one foot on a chair and the figure on my knee. I learned my dialogue, practised the movements of the figure, and was determined that this time I was going to be a success.

"Jim"—one of the greatest music-hall favourites of the day.

I succeeded, but not in the way I intended. I marched on to the stage with great confidence and a sort of "You've-got-to-have-it" expression, plumped my foot on to the seat of the chair, and went right through it. It was an old wicker-seated chair, and it hadn't been used to that kind of treatment. As I hadn't been prepared for this, I

lost my balance and fell, and, in falling, dropped the figure. For a few moments the audience enjoyed the spectacle of a bewildered ventriloquist vainly trying to extricate his right leg from a chair which seemed to want to cling to him.

They gave me another chair and I went through my performance, but it was not the success I had hoped for; every now and again some hysterical girl started to laugh, and then others laughed at her. My dialogue was not doing the trick for me; they were thinking about that chair.

I was afterwards very glad that that accident had happened, for it taught me that a ventriloquist need not stand up with one foot on a chair and the figure on his knee. I also learned two other things—that a ventriloquist's figure must be a living "character," and not a mere nondescript sort of a youth, and that a collection of jokes, however good, does not make a dialogue. Everything the figure says must be consistent with his character.

I plumped my foot on to the seat of the chair, went right through it, lost my balance, and fell

I have been accused over and over again of relying upon the help of a living human being for the voice of "Jim"; my assistant is supposed to be hidden somewhere on the stage. People have often come to my dressing-room with the thinnest of thin excuses, but really with the object of seeing if I really provide "Jim" with his voice. I remember one man who was very incredulous; he had come to ask me if I would give a turn at a soldiers' hospital, but he was obviously in doubt if I could ventriloquize at such a place.

"We've only a very small stage," he said, dubiously.

I told him that if it was large enough to stand on it would answer my purpose.

"It's just an ordinary platform," he said, and, of course, I could see what was running in his mind. "There is—er—no space beneath it."

I assured him that I did not need any space beneath the stage, and that if he preferred it I would stand off the stage. At that moment the sound of suppressed laughter came from the closed wardrobe in the dressing-room. My hospital friend turned his head quickly in that direction; I went on removing my make-up. Apparently I had not heard the man in the wardrobe trying to stop himself from laughing.

The sceptic became very confidential.

"I've no doubt," he went on, "that—er—we could arrange for some furniture—some large furniture—on the stage if—er—if it would be of any help." I assured him that it would not be necessary. Then my dresser went to the wardrobe to get my clothes. The incredulous gentleman peeped inside, and was so surprised at finding nothing but clothes there that he "flopped" on to the couch. He rose hastily, because he had apparently disturbed my dog under the couch, and then I thought it was my turn to laugh. Still, I don't know that he was entirely convinced even then that "Jim" used my voice when he was talking, for on the following day when I got to the hospital I noticed that my friend rushed out to welcome me and had a good look in the taxi and all round it—just to make sure that I was alone.

The imitation of a dog growling once came in very usefully. One winter's night I was walking in a deserted street; the fog was so thick that the street lamps were useless. A couple of burly ruffians came up out of the gloom and started to beg. I walked on; they accompanied me—one on each side—and I felt far from comfortable about having them as companions. So far as I could judge we three were the only men in London at the moment. The street was silent, and the fog and darkness combined hid everyone and everything. Therefore, when I said to my companions: "Mind the dog," they could not discover, by

The incredulous gentleman peeped inside the wardrobe.

turning round, that my dog was not with me, and as they heard the low, menacing growls of a very savage dog they naturally concluded that the dog was there and was on duty, and that it was hardly worth while to wait and see what the dog was going to do. So they left me, and as I happened to be carrying a gold watch, a five-pound note, and some loose silver, I considered that I had been well paid for giving one short imitation of a savage dog growling.

I ONCE had an opportunity of earning a very much larger fee by merely imitating the " meow " of a cat for a few moments. The " fee " in this case would have been the proceeds of a bet, but as I declined to bet with my hostess on what I knew was a certainty I did not take her money, though she was certainly very eager to bet with me. She had a cat of a very independent turn of mind. The cat, my hostess assured me, would take absolutely no notice of anyone in this world, except herself, and it was none too fond of being picked up by a stranger. I told my hostess that if she would allow me to lie back on the couch in her drawing-room for a moment I would undertake to change that cat's disposition by making it walk all over me.

" I will bet you any money you like," said my friend, " that you won't get that cat to jump on to your knee."

I said: " I'll bet you what I happen to have in my pocket that I do. Will you chance it ? "

The lady offered to double it if I liked, but I declined. She made one condition — that I was not to touch the cat with my hands. I lay back on the couch, and started to " purr " prettily. Cats, of course, like other animals, have a little language of their own. If I had given the wrong kind of " purr " I should merely have annoyed the cat I wanted to attract. I purred for half a minute, then I talked for a moment to the imaginary kitten under my coat. My hostess's independent cat looked up inquiringly at me for a moment and jumped on to my knee. In less than a minute this very shy cat was purring away for all she was worth, and was walking all over me in her efforts to find the little kitten which was also purring.

And the bet ? Well, I did a little trick which, I have no doubt, most schoolboys know all about. My hostess asked me how much money she owed me—that is to say, how much I had in my pockets. But when I turned out my pockets I was penniless—so she paid nothing.

The conversation of animals has always interested me, and I can speak some of their languages. Mr. Carr Lynn, the mimic, who can speak to any animal in its own language, once arranged with me to have a little game with some of our friends. I hid behind a tree while Carr Lynn chatted with our friends and strolled down to my hiding-place.

Presently Lynn said that if there was a horse anywhere within hearing he would make it answer his " neigh." Lynn neighed, and presently I replied, in correct equine language.

" Marvellous," said one of our friends. " Can you call up another animal in the same way ? "

So Lynn " mooed " like a nice sedate old cow, and I replied in the bovine tongue that I was quite well, thank you, and we should probably have carried on quite a long conversation if one of our friends had not gone to look for the cow and found me.

I have often been approached by budding young ventriloquists with the request that I will listen to them for a few moments while they ventriloquize and then give them a " few hints." As a rule, these young visitors have been exceedingly nervous, and I remember one who was almost trembling with fright as he was shown into my dressing-room. I think the boy's father had had an idea that the youth would not do justice to himself, so he had come with him to give him confidence.

The boy struck a very comical attitude after telling me that he could " throw his voice " to the ceiling, and his father spoke a few encouraging words. I did not expect to hear a very marvellous ventriloquist at work, but I did expect to hear something, and in this I was disappointed. Not a sound came from that boy's lips. He got very red in the face, but that was all. To help him out I imitated his voice as it would have sounded if he had been on the roof, and I thought myself that it was rather a good " distant voice " effect with a voice that I had heard for only a few moments.

" Now, Johnny," said the boy's father, " I've heard you do it better than that—much better. Have another try ! "

But Johnny thought he was a little out of practice, and he had better not have another try. I didn't give him away, and as he did not tell his father whose voice it was that had been speaking " on the roof " I told him—what I firmly believed to be true—that his distant voice really wasn't half bad !

I have never been fond of playing practical jokes on strangers, but occasionally some of my friends have become my victims. I remember once spending the evening with an old friend who had a favourite cat. Late in the evening my friend closed the French windows leading into the garden, locked and barred the door, closed the shutters, and fastened them. The whole job took several minutes.

After a time a faint " mewing " came from the garden.

" That's funny," said my friend ; " I could have sworn I let the old cat in."

As the " mewing " continued, my friend undid the shutters and the window, and went out into the garden to call the cat in. Not finding the cat he closed the windows and shutters once more, and we resumed our chat. In half an hour the " mewing " started again, and again my friend opened the shutters and window, and went out into the garden.

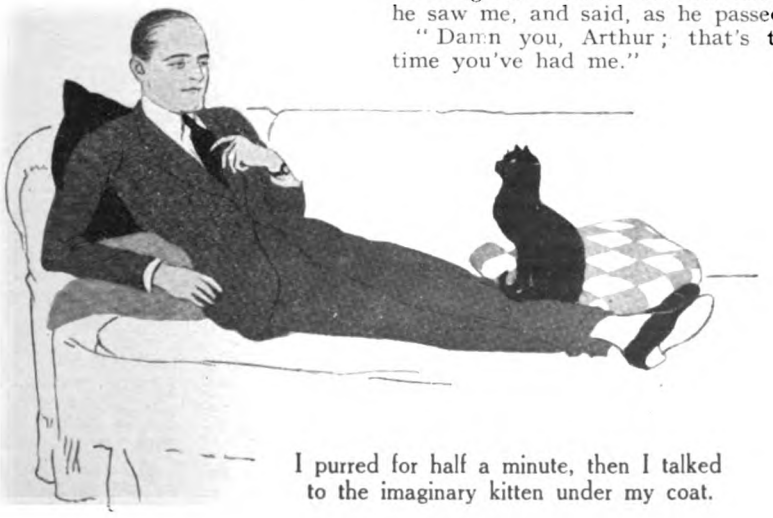
Then his wife came in and asked what he was doing, as the cat was fast asleep in her basket in the hall. And then she looked at me. My friend always says that he has not forgiven me, but I believe he has.

Mr. Gene Leahy, the analytical chemist of Dublin and Jermyn Street, is a great friend of mine. While passing out of the late Road Club one day he failed to see me at the porter's desk. The page boy threw open the door for him, and Leahy, in passing out, heard the boy say :—

" Good night, Gene ; drunk again, I see."

Leahy was dumbfounded. He turned sharply and looked at the boy. He—the man who took nothing stronger than barley water—accused by a Cockney page-boy of being drunk ! I don't know what he was going to say to the poor boy, but he turned first to the hall porter, who was covering his mouth with his hand. Then he saw me, and said, as he passed out :—

" Damn you, Arthur ; that's the third time you've had me."



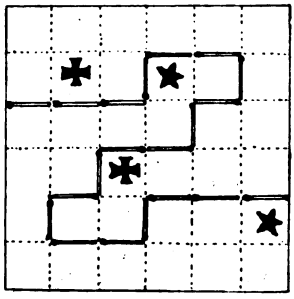
I purred for half a minute, then I talked to the imaginary kitten under my coat.

PERPLEXITIES.

By HENRY E. DUDENEY.

635.—TWENTY-SIX MATCHES.

MAKE a rough square diagram, like the one shown, where the side of every little square is the length of a match, and put the stars and crosses in their given positions. It is required to place twenty-six matches along the lines so as to enclose two parts of exactly the same size and shape, one part containing two stars and the other two crosses. In the example given each part is correctly of the same size and shape, and each part contains either two stars or two crosses, but unfortunately only twenty matches have been used. So it is not a solution. Can you do it with twenty-six matches?

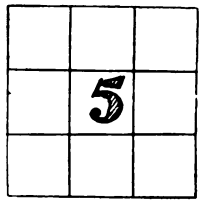


636.—PUZZLING LEGACIES.

A MAN bequeathed a sum of money, a little less than £1,500, to be divided as follows: The five children and the lawyer received such sums that the square root of the eldest son's share, the second son's share divided by 2, the third son's share minus £2, the fourth son's share plus £2, the daughter's share divided by 2, and the square of the lawyer's fee all worked out at exactly the same sum of money. No pounds were divided and no money left after the division. What was the total amount bequeathed? This is quite easy.

637.—A MAGIC SQUARE TRICK.

SOME years ago an American advertiser offered a large prize for a correct solution to a puzzle worded, in effect, in the following way. Place in the empty squares such figures (no two squares containing the same figure) that they shall add up 15 in as many straight directions as possible. Of course, thousands of people in their innocence sent in the simple magic square arrangement with which we are all familiar, and nobody won the prize, which was just what was wanted! Can you find a correct answer? I will let the cat half out of the bag. The word "figure" has not the same meaning as "number" and "straight direction" does not limit us to columns, rows, and two long diagonals: it may also include the short diagonals of two cells only.



638.—A PICTURE PRESENTATION.

A WEALTHY collector had ten valuable pictures. He proposed to make a presentation to a public gallery, but could not make up his mind as to how many he would give. So it amused him to work out the exact number of different ways. You see, he could give any one picture, any two, any three, and so on, or give the whole ten. The reader may think it a long and troublesome calculation, but I will give a little rule that will enable him to get the answer in all such cases without any difficulty and only trivial labour.

639.—MISSING WORDS.

I RECEIVED the following ingenious composition from a Canadian correspondent, Mrs. A. R.:—

They speak of ..... when trading in Cathay,
Of ..... of grain in Wales on market day,
In Devon as ..... are watercourses known,
In many lands men dig for ..... and stone.
..... o'erhead the miner's life may save.
He who from babes would ..... is called a knave.
The ..... of those who long ago have died,
Such as De ....., it cannot be denied.
They seem but ..... in this more stirring age,
And ..... of all the minds of youth engage.
A wonder-working wizard he of fame,
Lives o'er the water, ... is his name.

All the missing words contain the same five letters.

Solutions to Last Month's Puzzles.

629.—AN INSTRUCTIVE POSITION.

1. Kt—B 7, ch., 1. K—K 4 (*a*); 2. Q—K 8, ch., 2. K—B 4 (*b*); 3. Q—R 5, ch., 3. K—K 5 (*c*); 4. Q—R 7, ch., 4. K—K 4 (*d*); 5. Q—Kt 7, ch., 5. any move; 6. Q takes Q and wins.

(*a*) If 1. K—Q 3: 2. Kt—Kt 5, ch., wins the Q. If 1. K—B 4; 2. Q—B 6, ch., 2. K moves; 3. Kt checks and wins Q. (*b*) If 2. K elsewhere; 3. Kt checks and wins Q. (*c*) If 3. K elsewhere; 4. Kt checks and wins Q. (*d*) If 4. K—B 6; 5. Q—R 3, and wins Q. If 4. K elsewhere; 5. Kt checks and wins Q.

630.—A POETICAL POT-POURRI.

1. Gray—"Elegy in a Country Churchyard." 2. Kirke White—Quatorzain (miscalled a Sonnet). 3. Byron—"The Bride of Abydos." 4 and 5. Pope—"Essay on Man." 6. Goldsmith—"Deserted Village." 7. Pope—"Moral Essays." 8. Goldsmith—"The Traveller." 9. Beattie—"The Minstrel." 10. Pope—"Essay on Man." 11. Young—"Night Thoughts." 12. Shakespeare—"Hamlet." 13. Pope—"Moral Essays." 14. Pope—Horace, "Satire" I. 15. Shakespeare—"Hamlet." 16. Pope—"Eloisa to Abelard." 17. Addison—"Cato." 18. Goldsmith—"The Traveller." 19. Gray—"The Epitaph." 20. Shakespeare—"Midsummer Night's Dream."

631.—PAT AND THE PIG.

THE pig will run and be caught at 66⅔ yards, and Pat will run 133⅓ yards. The curve of Pat's line is one of those curves the length of which may be exactly measured. But I have not space to go into the method here.

632.—THE KEG OF WINE.

THE capacity of the jug must have been a little less than 3 gallons. To be more exact it was 2·93 gallons.

633.—ANAGRAMS.

BAKER. Tea-dealer. Auctioneer. Stationer. Tobacconist. Billbroker. Saddler. Sailor. Shoemaker. Lawyers.

634.—ADDING THEIR CUBES.

THE required number is 153. The cubes of 1, 5, and 3 are respectively 1, 125, and 27, and these added together make 153.

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THE STRAND MAGAZINE
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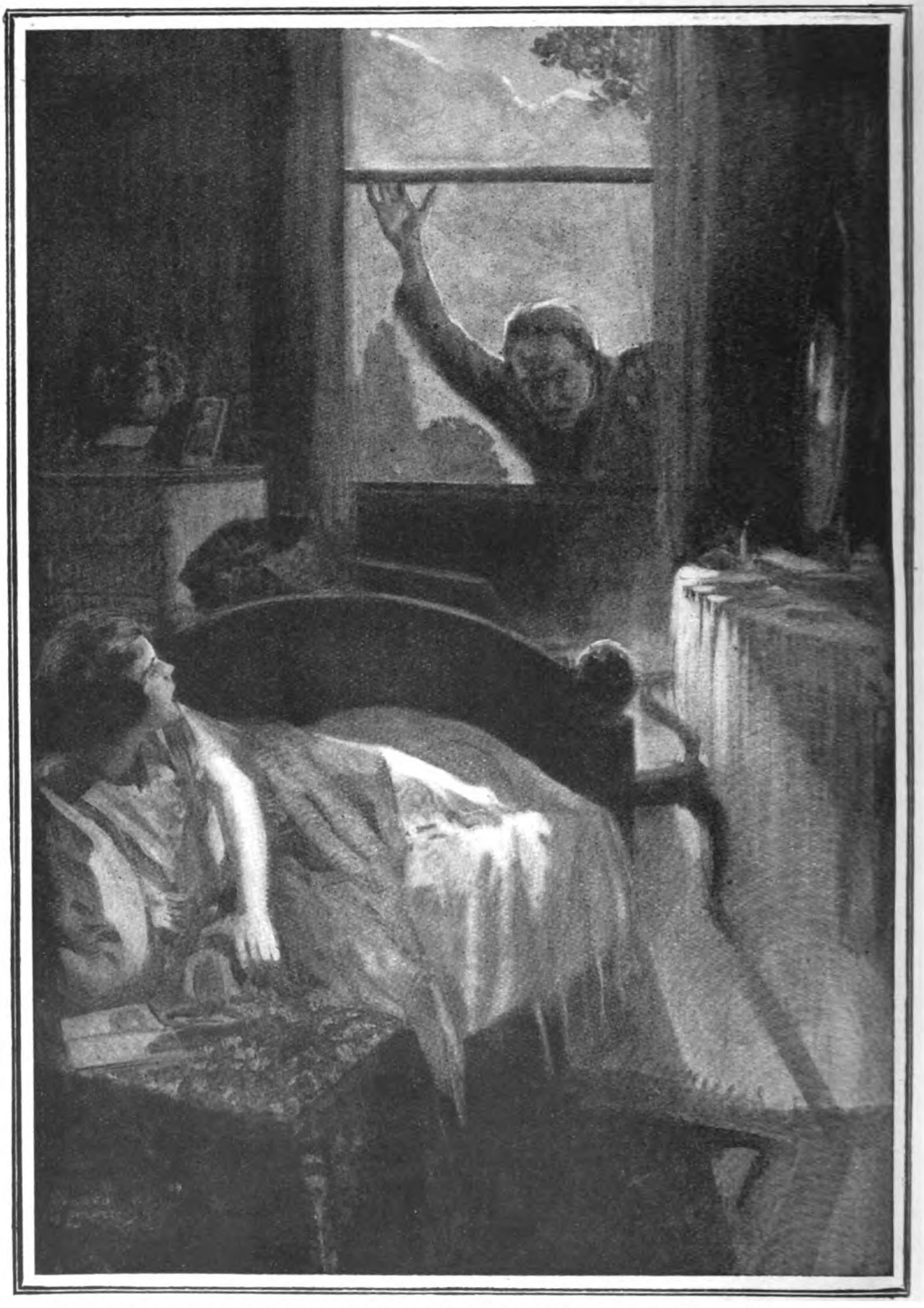

"AS I LAY WITH MY EYES FIXED UPON THE SQUARE OF LIGHT I WAS AMAZED TO SEE MY FATHER'S FACE LOOKING IN AT ME."

(*See page* 215.)

THE ADVENTURE OF THE CREEPING MAN

A NEW SHERLOCK HOLMES STORY

BY

A. Conan Doyle

ILLUSTRATED BY HOWARD ELCOCK

MR. SHERLOCK HOLMES was always of opinion that I should publish the singular facts connected with Professor Presbury, if only to dispel once for all the ugly rumours which some twenty years ago agitated the University and were echoed in the learned societies of London. There were, however, certain obstacles in the way, and the true history of this curious case remained entombed in the tin box which contains so many records of my friend's adventures. Now we have at last obtained permission to ventilate the facts which formed one of the very last cases handled by Holmes before his retirement from practice. Even now a certain reticence and discretion have to be observed in laying the matter before the public.

It was one Sunday evening early in September of the year 1902 that I received one of Holmes's laconic messages: "Come at once if convenient—if inconvenient come all the same.—S. H." The relations between us in those latter days were peculiar. He was a man of habits, narrow and concentrated habits, and I had become one of them. As an institution I was like the violin, the shag tobacco, the old black pipe, the index books, and others perhaps less excusable. When it was a case of active work and a comrade was needed upon whose nerve he could place some reliance, my *rôle* was obvious. But apart from this I had uses. I was a whetstone for his mind. I stimulated him. He liked to think aloud in my presence. His remarks could hardly be said to be made to me—many of them would have been as appropriately addressed to his bedstead—but none the less, having formed the habit, it had become in some way helpful that I should register and interject. If I irritated him by a certain methodical slowness in my mentality, that irritation served only to make his own flame-like intuitions and impressions flash up the more vividly and swiftly. Such was my humble *rôle* in our alliance.

When I arrived at Baker Street I found him huddled up in his arm-chair with updrawn knees, his pipe in his mouth and his brow furrowed with thought. It was clear that he was in the throes of some vexatious problem. With a wave of his hand he indicated my old arm-chair, but otherwise for half an hour he gave no sign that he was aware of my presence. Then with a start he seemed to come from his reverie, and, with his usual whimsical smile, he greeted me back to what had once been my home.

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"You will excuse a certain abstraction of mind, my dear Watson," said he. "Some curious facts have been submitted to me within the last twenty-four hours, and they in turn have given rise to some speculations of a more general character. I have serious thoughts of writing a small monograph upon the uses of dogs in the work of the detective."

"But surely, Holmes, this has been explored," said I. "Bloodhounds—sleuth-hounds——"

"No, no, Watson; that side of the matter is, of course, obvious. But there is another which is far more subtle. You may recollect that in the case which you, in your sensational way, coupled with the Copper Beeches, I was able, by watching the mind of the child, to form a deduction as to the criminal habits of the very smug and respectable father."

"Yes, I remember it well."

"My line of thoughts about dogs is analogous. A dog reflects the family life. Whoever saw a frisky dog in a gloomy family, or a sad dog in a happy one? Snarling people have snarling dogs, dangerous people have dangerous ones. And their passing moods may reflect the passing moods of others."

I shook my head. "Surely, Holmes, this is a little far-fetched," said I.

He had refilled his pipe and resumed his seat, taking no notice of my comment.

"The practical application of what I have said is very close to the problem which I am investigating. It is a tangled skein, you understand, and I am looking for a loose end. One possible loose end lies in the question: Why does Professor Presbury's faithful wolf-hound, Roy, endeavour to bite him?"

I sank back in my chair in some disappointment. Was it for so trivial a question as this that I had been summoned from my work? Holmes glanced across at me.

"The same old Watson!" said he. "You never learn that the gravest issues may depend upon the smallest things. But is it not on the face of it strange that a staid, elderly philosopher—you've heard of Presbury, of course, the famous Camford physiologist?—that such a man, whose friend has been his devoted wolf-hound, should now have been twice attacked by his own dog? What do you make of it?"

"The dog is ill."

"Well, that has to be considered. But he attacks no one else, nor does he apparently molest his master, save on very special occasions. Curious, Watson—very curious. But young Mr. Bennett is before his time, if that is his ring. I had hoped to have a longer chat with you before he came."

THERE was a quick step on the stairs, a sharp tap at the door, and a moment later the new client presented himself. He was a tall, handsome youth about thirty, well dressed and elegant, but with something in his bearing which suggested the shyness of the student rather than the self-possession of the man of the world. He shook hands with Holmes, and then looked with some surprise at me.

"This matter is very delicate, Mr. Holmes," he said. "Consider the relation in which I stand to Professor Presbury, both privately and publicly. I really can hardly justify myself if I speak before any third person."

"Have no fear, Mr. Bennett. Dr. Watson is the very soul of discretion, and I can assure you that this is a matter in which I am very likely to need an assistant."

"As you like, Mr. Holmes. You will, I am sure, understand my having some reserves in the matter."

"You will appreciate it, Watson, when I tell you that this gentleman, Mr. Trevor Bennett, is professional assistant to the great scientist, lives under his roof, and is engaged to his only daughter. Certainly we must agree that the Professor has every claim upon his loyalty and devotion. But it may best be shown by taking the necessary steps to clear up this strange mystery."

"I hope so, Mr. Holmes. That is my one object. Does Dr. Watson know the situation?"

"I have not had time to explain it."

"Then perhaps I had better go over the ground again before explaining some fresh developments."

"I will do so myself," said Holmes, "in order to show that I have the events in their due order. The Professor, Watson, is a man of European reputation. His life has been academic. There has never been a breath of scandal. He is a widower with one daughter, Edith. He is, I gather, a man of very virile and positive, one might almost say combative, character. So the matter stood until a very few months ago.

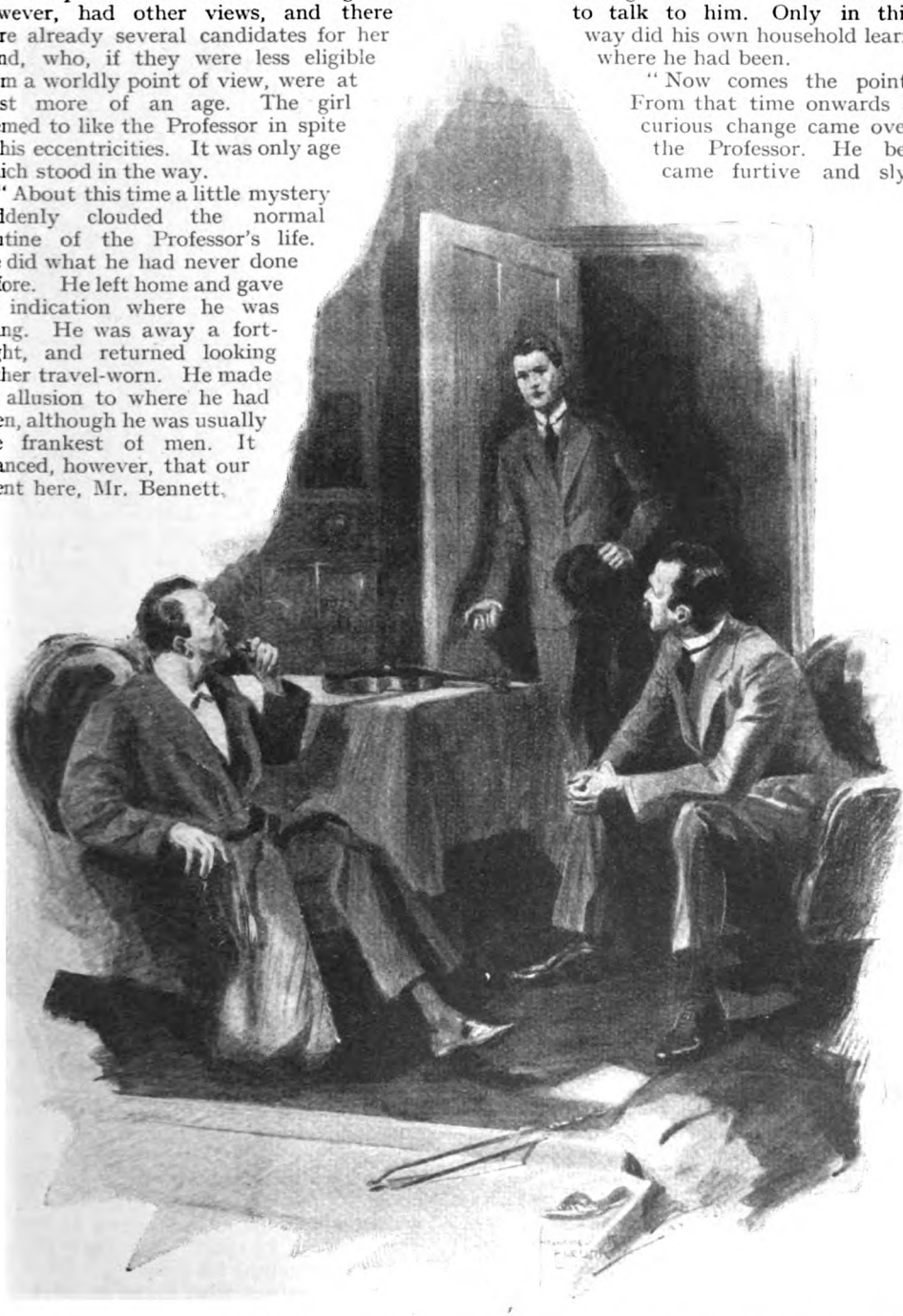
"Then the current of his life was broken. He is sixty-one years of age, but he became engaged to the daughter of Professor Morphy, his colleague in the chair of Comparative Anatomy. It was not, as I understand, the reasoned courting of an elderly man, but rather the passionate frenzy of youth, for no one could have shown himself a more devoted lover. The lady, Alice Morphy, was a very perfect girl both in mind and body, so that there was every excuse for the Professor's infatuation. None the less, it did not meet with full approval in his own family."

"We thought it rather excessive," said our visitor.

"Exactly. Excessive and a little violent and unnatural. Professor Presbury was rich, however, and there was no objection upon the part of the father. The daughter, however, had other views, and there were already several candidates for her hand, who, if they were less eligible from a worldly point of view, were at least more of an age. The girl seemed to like the Professor in spite of his eccentricities. It was only age which stood in the way.

"About this time a little mystery suddenly clouded the normal routine of the Professor's life. He did what he had never done before. He left home and gave no indication where he was going. He was away a fortnight, and returned looking rather travel-worn. He made no allusion to where he had been, although he was usually the frankest of men. It chanced, however, that our client here, Mr. Bennett, received a letter from a fellow-student in Prague, who said that he was glad to have seen Professor Presbury there, although he had not been able to talk to him. Only in this way did his own household learn where he had been.

"Now comes the point. From that time onwards a curious change came over the Professor. He became furtive and sly.



There was a sharp tap at the door, and a moment later the new client presented himself.

Those around him had always the feeling that he was not the man that they had known, but that he was under some shadow which had darkened his higher qualities. His intellect was not affected. His lectures were as brilliant as ever. But always there was something new, something sinister and unexpected. His daughter, who was devoted to him, tried again and again to resume the old relations and to penetrate this mask which her father seemed to have put on. You, sir, as I understand, did the same—but all was in vain. And now, Mr. Bennett, tell in your own words the incident of the letters."

"You must understand, Dr. Watson, that the Professor had no secrets from me. If I were his son or his younger brother, I could not have more completely enjoyed his confidence. As his secretary I handled every paper which came to him, and I opened and subdivided his letters. Shortly after his return all this was changed. He told me that certain letters might come to him from London which would be marked by a cross under the stamp. These were to be set aside for his own eyes only. I may say that several of these did pass through my hands, that they had the E.C. mark, and were in an illiterate handwriting. If he answered them at all the answers did not pass through my hands nor into the letter-basket in which our correspondence was collected."

"And the box," said Holmes.

"Ah, yes, the box. The Professor brought back a little wooden box from his travels. It was the one thing which suggested a Continental tour, for it was one of those quaint carved things which one associates with Germany. This he placed in his instrument cupboard. One day, in looking for a canula, I took up the box. To my surprise he was very angry, and reproved me in words which were quite savage for my curiosity. It was the first time such a thing had happened and I was deeply hurt. I endeavoured to explain that it was a mere accident that I had touched the box, but all the evening I was conscious that he looked at me harshly and that the incident was rankling in his mind." Mr. Bennett drew a little diary book from his pocket. "That was on the 2nd of July," said he.

"You are certainly an admirable witness," said Holmes. "I may need some of these dates which you have noted."

"I learned method among other things from my great teacher. From the time that I observed abnormality in his behaviour I felt that it was my duty to study his case. Thus I have it here that it was on that very day, July 2nd, that Roy attacked the Professor as he came from his study into the hall. Again on July 11th there was a scene of the same sort, and then I have a note of yet another upon July 20th. After that we had to banish Roy to the stables. He was a dear, affectionate animal—but I fear I weary you."

MR. BENNETT spoke in a tone of reproach, for it was very clear that Holmes was not listening. His face was rigid and his eyes gazed abstractedly at the ceiling. With an effort he recovered himself.

"Singular! Most singular!" he murmured. "These details were new to me, Mr. Bennett. I think we have now fairly gone over the old ground, have we not? But you spoke of some fresh development."

The pleasant, open face of our visitor clouded over, shadowed by some grim remembrance. "What I speak of occurred the night before last," said he. "I was lying awake about two in the morning, when I was aware of a dull muffled sound coming from the passage. I opened my door and peeped out. I should explain that the Professor sleeps at the end of the passage——"

"The date being——?" asked Holmes.

Our visitor was clearly annoyed at so irrelevant an interruption.

"I have said, sir, that it was the night before last—that is, September 4th."

Holmes nodded and smiled.

"Pray continue," said he.

"He sleeps at the end of the passage, and would have to pass my door in order to reach the staircase. It was a really terrifying experience, Mr. Holmes. I think that I am as strong-nerved as my neighbours, but I was shaken by what I saw. The passage was dark save that one window half-way along it threw a patch of light. I could see that something was coming along the passage, something dark and crouching. Then suddenly it emerged into the light, and I saw that it was he. He was crawling, Mr. Holmes—crawling! He was not quite on his hands and knees. I should rather say on his hands and feet, with his face sunk between his hands. Yet he seemed to move with ease. I was so paralysed by the sight that it was not until he had reached my door that I was able to step forward and ask if I could assist him. His answer was extraordinary. He sprang up, spat out some atrocious word at me, and hurried on past me and down the staircase. I waited about for an hour, but he did not come back. It must have been daylight before he regained his room."

"Well, Watson, what make you of that?" asked Holmes, with the air of the pathologist who presents a rare specimen.

"Lumbago, possibly. I have known a

severe attack make a man walk in just such a way, and nothing would be more trying to the temper."

"Good, Watson! You always keep us flat-footed on the ground. But we can hardly accept lumbago, since he was able to stand erect in a moment."

"He was never better in health," said Bennett. "In fact, he is stronger than I have known him for years. But there are the facts, Mr. Holmes. It is not a case in which we can consult the police, and yet we are utterly at our wits' end as to what to do, and we feel in some strange way that we are drifting towards disaster. Edith—Miss Presbury—feels as I do, that we cannot wait passively any longer."

"It is certainly a very curious and suggestive case. What do you think, Watson?"

"Speaking as a medical man," said I, "it appears to be a case for an alienist. The old gentleman's cerebral processes were disturbed by the love affair. He made a journey abroad in the hope of breaking himself of the passion. His letters and the box may be connected with some other private transaction—a loan, perhaps, or share certificates, which are in the box."

"And the wolf-hound no doubt disapproved of the financial bargain. No, no, Watson, there is more in it than this. Now, I can only suggest——"

WHAT Sherlock Holmes was about to suggest will never be known, for at this moment the door opened and a young lady was shown into the room. As she appeared Mr. Bennett sprang up with a cry and ran forward with his hands out to meet those which she had herself outstretched.

"Edith, dear! Nothing the matter, I hope?"

"I felt I must follow you. Oh, Jack, I have been so dreadfully frightened! It is awful to be there alone."

"Mr. Holmes, this is the young lady I spoke of. This is my *fiancée*."

"We were gradually coming to that conclusion, were we not, Watson?" Holmes answered, with a smile. "I take it, Miss Presbury, that there is some fresh development in the case, and that you thought we should know?"

Our new visitor, a bright, handsome girl of a conventional English type, smiled back at Holmes as she seated herself beside Mr. Bennett.

"When I found Mr. Bennett had left his hotel I thought I should probably find him here. Of course, he had told me that he would consult you. But, oh, Mr. Holmes, can you do nothing for my poor father?"

"I have hopes, Miss Presbury, but the case is still obscure. Perhaps what you have to say may throw some fresh light upon it."

"It was last night, Mr. Holmes. He had been very strange all day. I am sure that there are times when he has no recollection of what he does. He lives as in a strange dream. Yesterday was such a day. It was not my father with whom I lived. His outward shell was there, but it was not really he."

"Tell me what happened."

"I was awakened in the night by the dog barking most furiously. Poor Roy, he is chained now near the stable. I may say that I always sleep with my door locked; for, as Jack—as Mr. Bennett—will tell you, we all have a feeling of impending danger. My room is on the second floor. It happened that the blind was up in my window, and there was bright moonlight outside. As I lay with my eyes fixed upon the square of light, listening to the frenzied barkings of the dog, I was amazed to see my father's face looking in at me. Mr. Holmes, I nearly died of surprise and horror. There it was pressed against the window-pane, and one hand seemed to be raised as if to push up the window. If that window had opened, I think I should have gone mad. It was no delusion, Mr. Holmes. Don't deceive yourself by thinking so. I dare say it was twenty seconds or so that I lay paralysed and watched the face. Then it vanished, but I could not—I could not spring out of bed and look out after it. I lay cold and shivering till morning. At breakfast he was sharp and fierce in manner, and made no allusion to the adventure of the night. Neither did I, but I gave an excuse for coming to town—and here I am."

Holmes looked thoroughly surprised at Miss Presbury's narrative.

"My dear young lady, you say that your room is on the second floor. Is there a long ladder in the garden?"

"No, Mr. Holmes; that is the amazing part of it. There is no possible way of reaching the window—and yet he was there."

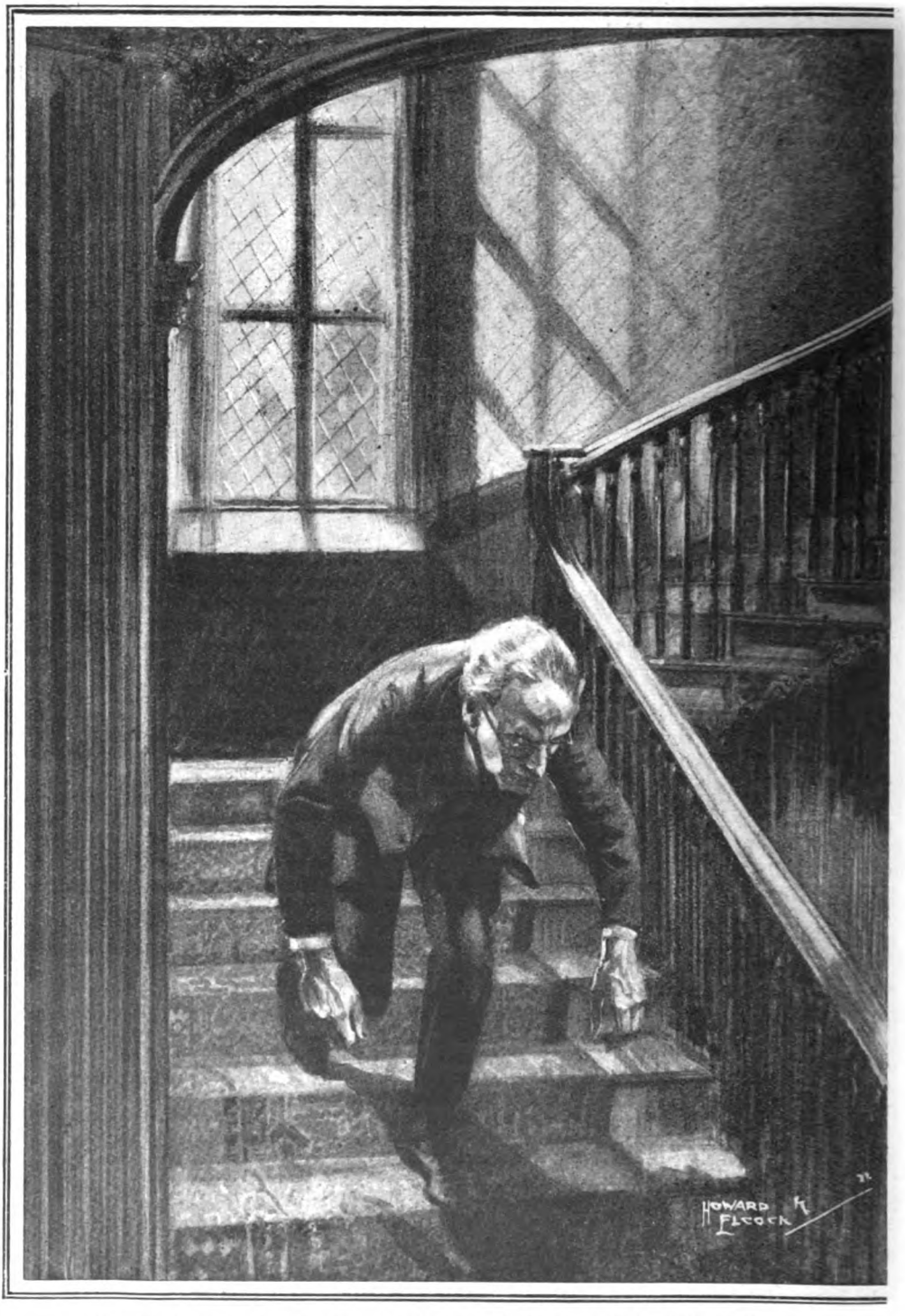
"The date being September 4th," said Holmes. "That certainly complicates matters."

It was the young lady's turn to look surprised. "This is the second time that you have alluded to the date, Mr. Holmes," said Bennett. "Is it possible that it has any bearing upon the case?"

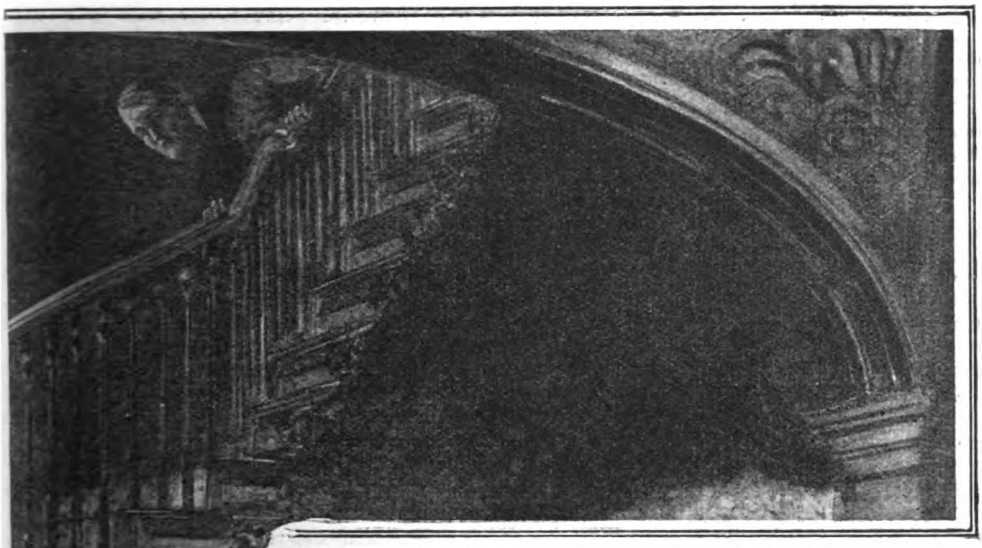
"It is possible—very possible—and yet I have not my full material at present."

"Possibly you are thinking of the connection between insanity and phases of the moon?"

"No, I assure you. It was quite a different line of thought. Possibly you can



The Professor spat out some atrocious word at me and hurried on down the staircase.



leave your note-book with me and I will check the dates. Now I think, Watson, that our line of action is perfectly clear. This young lady has informed us—and I have the greatest confidence in her intuition—that her father remembers little or nothing which occurs upon certain dates. We will therefore call upon him as if he had given us an appointment upon such a date. He will put it down to his own lack of memory. Thus we will open our campaign by having a good close view of him."

"That is excellent," said Mr. Bennett. "I warn you, however, that the Professor is irascible and violent at times."

Holmes smiled. "There are reasons why we should come at once—very cogent reasons if my theories hold good. To-morrow, Mr. Bennett, will certainly see us in Camford. There is, if I remember right, an inn called the Chequers where the port used to be above mediocrity, and the linen was above reproach. I think, Watson, that our lot for the next few days might lie in less pleasant places."

Monday morning found us on our way to the famous University town—an easy effort on the part of Holmes, who had no roots to pull up, but one which involved frantic planning and hurrying on my part, as my practice was by this time not inconsiderable. Holmes made no allusion to the case until after we had deposited our suit-cases at the ancient hostel of which he had spoken.

"I think, Watson, that we can catch the Professor just before lunch. He lectures at eleven, and should have an interval at home."

"What possible excuse have we for calling?"

Holmes glanced at his note-book.

"There was a period of excitement upon August 26th. We will assume that he is a little hazy as to what he does at such times. If we insist that we are there by appointment I think he will hardly venture to contradict us. Have you the effrontery necessary to put it through?"

"We can but try."

"Excellent, Watson! Compound of the Busy Bee and Excelsior. We can but try—the motto of the firm. A friendly native will surely guide us."

Such a one on the back of a smart hansom swept us past a row of ancient colleges, and finally turning into a tree-lined drive pulled up at the door of a charming house, girt round with lawns and covered with purple wistaria. Professor Presbury was certainly surrounded with every sign not only of comfort but of luxury. Even as we pulled up a grizzled head appeared at the front window, and we were aware of a pair of keen eyes from under shaggy brows which surveyed us through large horn glasses. A moment later we were actually in his sanctum, and the mysterious scientist, whose vagaries had brought us from London, was standing before us. There was certainly no sign of eccentricity either in his manner or appearance, for he was a portly, large-featured man, grave, tall, and frock-coated, with the dignity of bearing which a lecturer needs. His eyes were his most remarkable feature, keen, observant, and clever to the verge of cunning.

He looked at our cards. "Pray sit down, gentlemen. What can I do for you?"

Mr. Holmes smiled amiably.

"It was the question which I was about to put to you, Professor."

"To me, sir!"

"Possibly there is some mistake. I heard through a second person that Professor Presbury of Camford had need of my services."

"Oh, indeed!" It seemed to me that there was a malicious sparkle in the intense grey eyes. "You heard that, did you? May I ask the name of your informant?"

"I am sorry, Professor, but the matter was rather confidential. If I have made a mistake there is no harm done. I can only express my regret."

"Not at all. I should wish to go further into this matter. It interests me. Have you any scrap of writing, any letter or telegram, to bear out your assertion?"

"No, I have not."

"I presume that you do not go so far as to assert that I summoned you?"

"I would rather answer no questions," said Holmes.

"No, I dare say not," said the Professor, with asperity. "However, that particular one can be answered very easily without your aid."

HE walked across the room to the bell. Our London friend, Mr. Bennett, answered the call.

"Come in, Mr. Bennett. These two gentlemen have come from London under the impression that they have been summoned. You handle all my correspondence. Have you a note of anything going to a person named Holmes?"

"No, sir," Bennett answered, with a flush.

"That is conclusive," said the Professor, glaring angrily at my companion. "Now, sir"—he leaned forward with his two hands upon the table—"it seems to me that your position is a very questionable one."

Holmes shrugged his shoulders.

"I can only repeat that I am sorry that we have made a needless intrusion."

"Hardly enough, Mr. Holmes!" the old man cried, in a high screaming voice, with extraordinary malignancy upon his face. He got between us and the door as he spoke, and he shook his two hands at us with furious passion. "You can hardly get out of it so easily as that." His face was convulsed and he grinned and gibbered at us in his senseless rage. I am convinced that we should have had to fight our way out of the room if Mr. Bennett had not intervened.

"My dear Professor," he cried, "consider your position! Consider the scandal at the University! Mr. Holmes is a well-known man. You cannot possibly treat him with such discourtesy."

Sulkily our host—if I may call him so—cleared the path to the door. We were glad to find ourselves outside the house, and in the quiet of the tree-lined drive. Holmes seemed greatly amused by the episode.

"Our learned friend's nerves are somewhat out of order," said he. "Perhaps our intrusion was a little crude, and yet we have gained that personal contact which I desired. But, dear me, Watson, he is surely at our heels. The villain still pursues us."

There were the sounds of running feet behind, but it was, to my relief, not the formidable Professor but his assistant who appeared round the curve of the drive. He came panting up to us.

"I am so sorry, Mr. Holmes. I wished to apologize."

"My dear sir, there is no need. It is all in the way of professional experience."

"I have never seen him in a more dangerous mood. But he grows more sinister. You can understand now why his daughter and I are alarmed. And yet his mind is perfectly clear."

"Too clear!" said Holmes. "That was my miscalculation. It is evident that his memory is much more reliable than I had thought. By the way, can we, before we go, see the window of Miss Presbury's room?"

Mr. Bennett pushed his way through some shrubs and we had a view of the side of the house.

"It is there. The second on the left."

"Dear me, it seems hardly accessible. And yet you will observe that there is a creeper below and a water pipe above which give some foothold."

"I could not climb it myself," said Mr. Bennett.

"Very likely. It would certainly be a dangerous exploit for any normal man."

"There was one other thing I wished to tell you, Mr. Holmes. I have the address of the man in London to whom the Professor writes. He seems to have written this morning and I got it from his blotting paper. It is an ignoble position for a trusted secretary, but what else can I do?"

Holmes glanced at the paper and put it into his pocket.

"Dorak—a curious name. Slavonic, I imagine. Well, it is an important link in the chain. We return to London this afternoon, Mr. Bennett. I see no good purpose to be served by our remaining. We cannot arrest the Professor because he has done no crime, nor can we place him under constraint, for he cannot be

proved to be mad. No action is as yet possible."

"Then what on earth are we to do?"

"A little patience, Mr. Bennett. Things will soon develop. Unless I am mistaken next Tuesday may mark a crisis. Certainly we shall be in Camford on that day. Meanwhile, the general position is undeniably unpleasant, and if Miss Presbury can prolong her visit——"

"That is easy."

"Then let her stay till we can assure her that all danger is past. Meanwhile let him have his way and do not cross him. So long as he is in a good humour all is well."

"There he is!" said Bennett, in a startled whisper. Looking between the branches we saw the tall, erect figure emerge from the hall door and look around him. He stood leaning forward, his hands swinging straight before him, his head turning from side to side. The secretary with a last wave slipped off among the trees, and we saw him presently rejoin his employer, the two entering the house together in what seemed to be animated and even excited conversation.

"I expect the old gentleman has been putting two and two together," said Holmes, as we walked hotel-wards. "He struck me as having a particularly clear and logical brain, from the little I saw of him. Explosive, no doubt, but then from his point of view he has something to explode about if detectives are put on his track and he suspects his own household of doing it. I rather fancy that friend Bennett is in for an uncomfortable time."

Holmes stopped at a post-office and sent off a telegram on our way. The answer reached us in the evening, and he tossed it across to me. "Have visited the Commercial Road and seen Dorak. Suave person, Bohemian, elderly. Keeps large general store —Mercer."

"Mercer is since your time," said Holmes. "He is my general utility man who looks up routine business. It was important to know something of the man with whom our Professor was so secretly corresponding. His nationality connects up with the Prague visit."

"Thank goodness that something connects with something," said I. "At present we seem to be faced by a long series of inexplicable incidents with no bearing upon each other. For example, what possible connection can there be between an angry wolf-hound and a visit to Bohemia, or either of them with a man crawling down a passage at night? As to your dates, that is the biggest mystification of all."

Holmes smiled and rubbed his hands. We were, I may say, seated in the old sitting-room of the ancient hotel, with a bottle of the famous vintage of which Holmes had spoken on the table between us.

"Well, now, let us take the dates first," said he, his finger-tips together and his manner as if he were addressing a class. "This excellent young man's diary shows that there was trouble upon July 2nd, and from then onwards it seems to have been at nine-day intervals, with, so far as I remember, only one exception. Thus the last outbreak upon Friday was on September 3rd, which also falls into the series, as did August 26th, which preceded it. The thing is beyond coincidence."

I was forced to agree.

"Let us, then, form the provisional theory that every nine days the Professor takes some strong drug which has a passing but highly poisonous effect. His naturally violent nature is intensified by it. He learned to take this drug while he was in Prague, and is now supplied with it by a Bohemian intermediary in London. This all hangs together, Watson!"

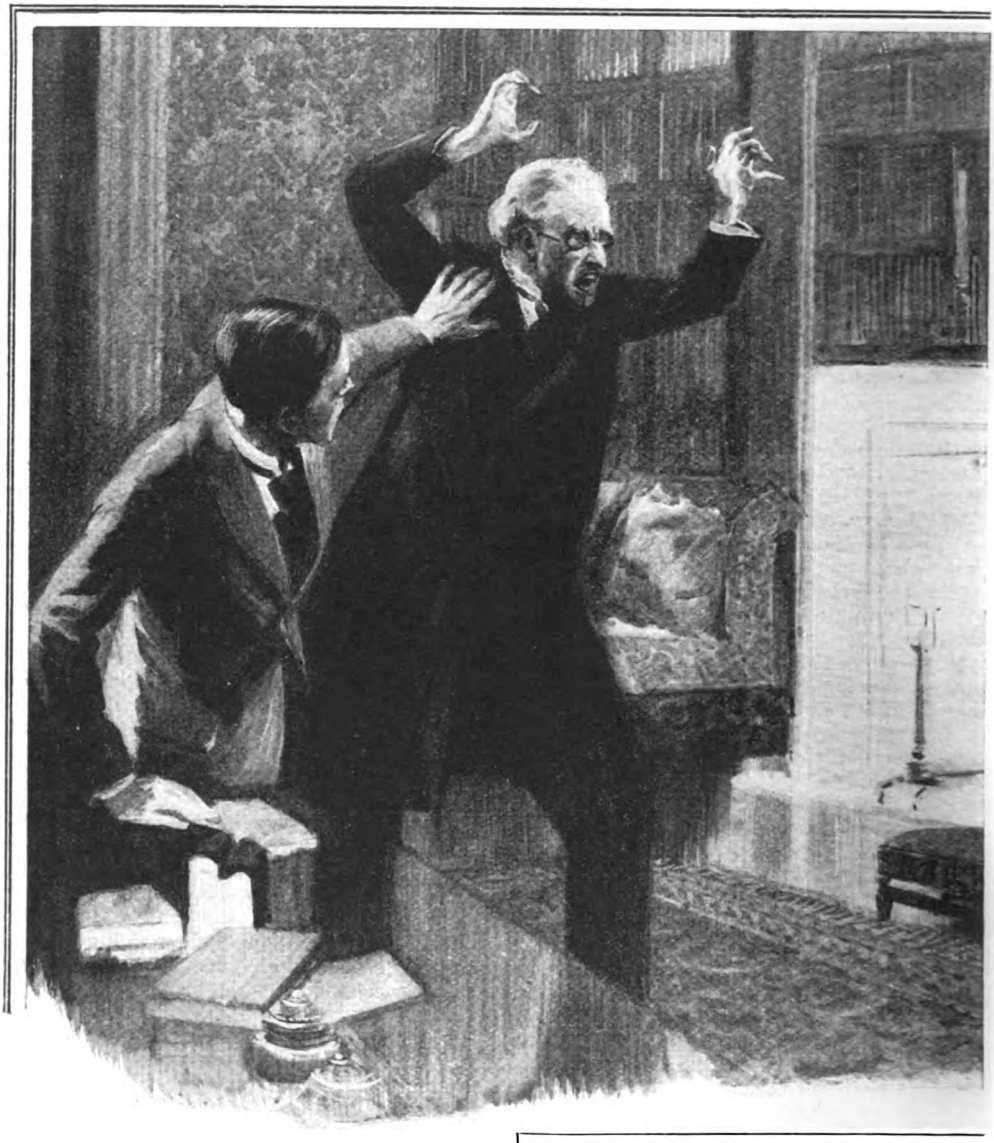
"But the dog, the face at the window, the creeping man in the passage?"

"Well, well, we have made a beginning. I should not expect any fresh developments until next Tuesday. In the meantime we can only keep in touch with friend Bennett and enjoy the amenities of this charming town."

IN the morning Mr. Bennett slipped round to bring us the latest report. As Holmes had imagined, times had not been easy with him. Without exactly accusing him of being responsible for our presence, the Professor had been very rough and rude in his speech, and evidently felt some strong grievance. This morning he was quite himself again, however, and had delivered his usual brilliant lecture to a crowded class. "Apart from his queer fits," said Bennett, "he has actually more energy and vitality than I can ever remember, nor was his brain ever clearer. But it's not he—it's never the man whom we have known."

"I don't think you have anything to fear now for a week at least," Holmes answered. "I am a busy man, and Dr. Watson has his patients to attend to. Let us agree that we meet here at this hour next Tuesday, and I shall be surprised if before we leave you again we are not able to explain, even if we cannot perhaps put an end to, your troubles. Meanwhile, keep us posted in what occurs."

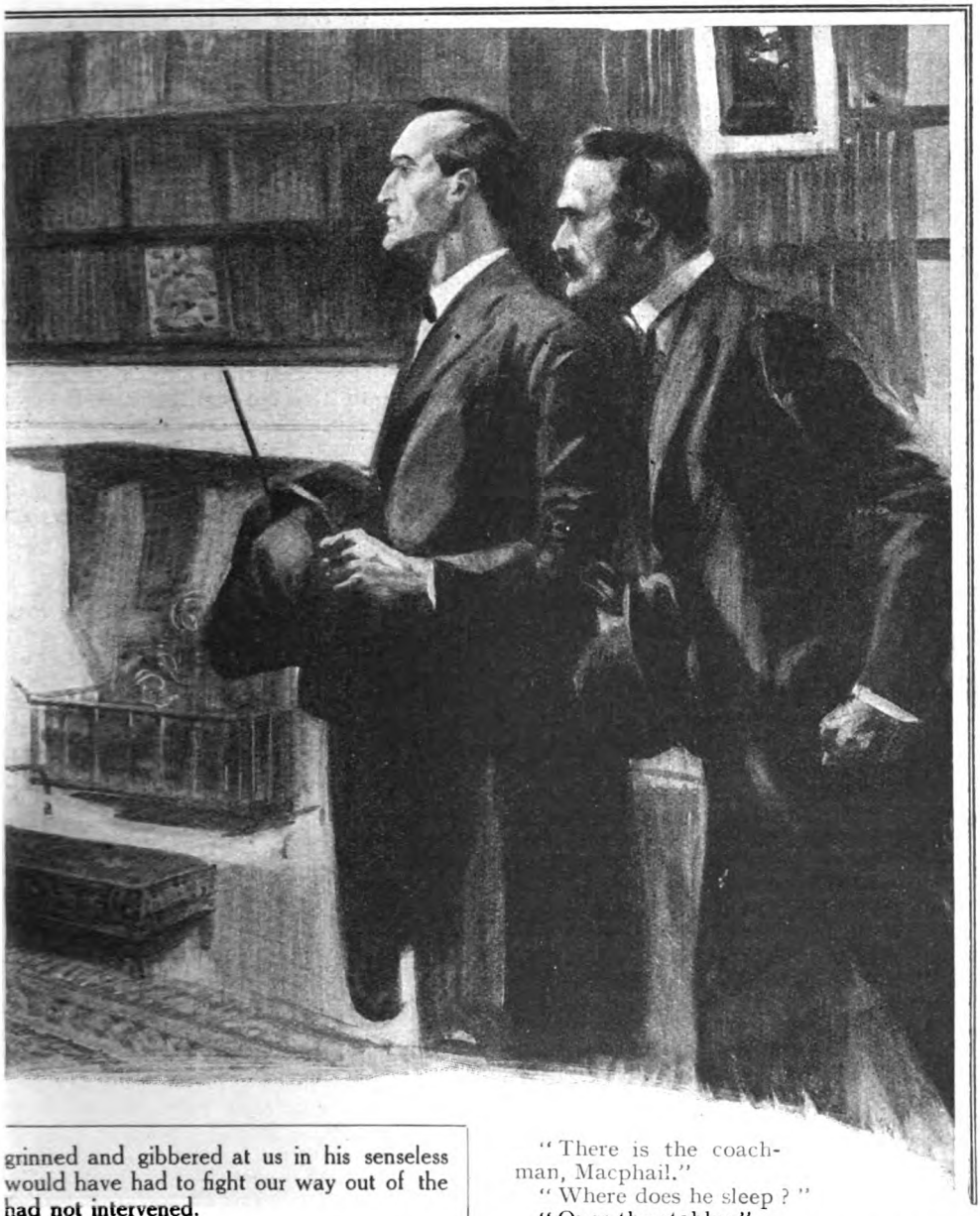
I SAW nothing of my friend for the next few days, but on the following Monday evening I had a short note asking me to meet him next day at the train. From



The Professor's face was convulsed and he rage. I am convinced that Holmes and I room if Mr. Bennett

what he told me as we travelled up to Camford all was well, the peace of the Professor's house had been unruffled, and his own conduct perfectly normal. This also was the report which was given us by Mr. Bennett himself when he called upon us that evening at our old quarters in the Chequers. "He heard from his London correspondent to-day. There was a letter and there was a small packet, each with the cross under the stamp which warned me not to touch them. There has been nothing else."

"That may prove quite enough," said Holmes, grimly. "Now, Mr. Bennett, we shall, I think, come to some conclusion to-night. If my deductions are correct we should have an opportunity of bringing matters to a head. In order to do so it is necessary to hold the Professor under observation. I would suggest, therefore, that you remain awake and on the look-out. Should you hear him pass your door do not



grinned and gibbered at us in his senseless
would have had to fight our way out of the
had not intervened.

interrupt him, but follow him as discreetly as you can. Dr. Watson and I will not be far off. By the way, where is the key of that little box of which you spoke?"

"Upon his watch-chain."

"I fancy our researches must lie in that direction. At the worst the lock should not be very formidable. Have you any other able-bodied man on the premises?"

"There is the coachman, Macphail."

"Where does he sleep?"

"Over the stables."

"We might possibly want him. Well, we can do no more until we see how things develop. Good-bye—but I expect that we shall see you before morning."

IT was nearly midnight before we took our station among some bushes immediately opposite the hall door of the Professor. It was a fine night, but chilly, and we were glad of our warm overcoats. There was a breeze and clouds were scudding across the

sky, obscuring from time to time the half-moon. It would have been a dismal vigil were it not for the expectation and excitement which carried us along, and the assurance of my comrade that we had probably reached the end of the strange sequence of events which had engaged our attention.

"If the cycle of nine days holds good then we shall have the Professor at his worst to-night," said Holmes. "The fact that these strange symptoms began after his visit to Prague, that he is in secret correspondence with a Bohemian dealer in London, who presumably represents someone in Prague, and that he received a packet from him this very day, all point in one direction. What he takes and why he takes it are still beyond our ken, but that it emanates in some way from Prague is clear enough. He takes it under definite directions which regulate this ninth day system, which was the first point which attracted my attention. But his symptoms are most remarkable. Did you observe his knuckles?"

I had to confess that I did not.

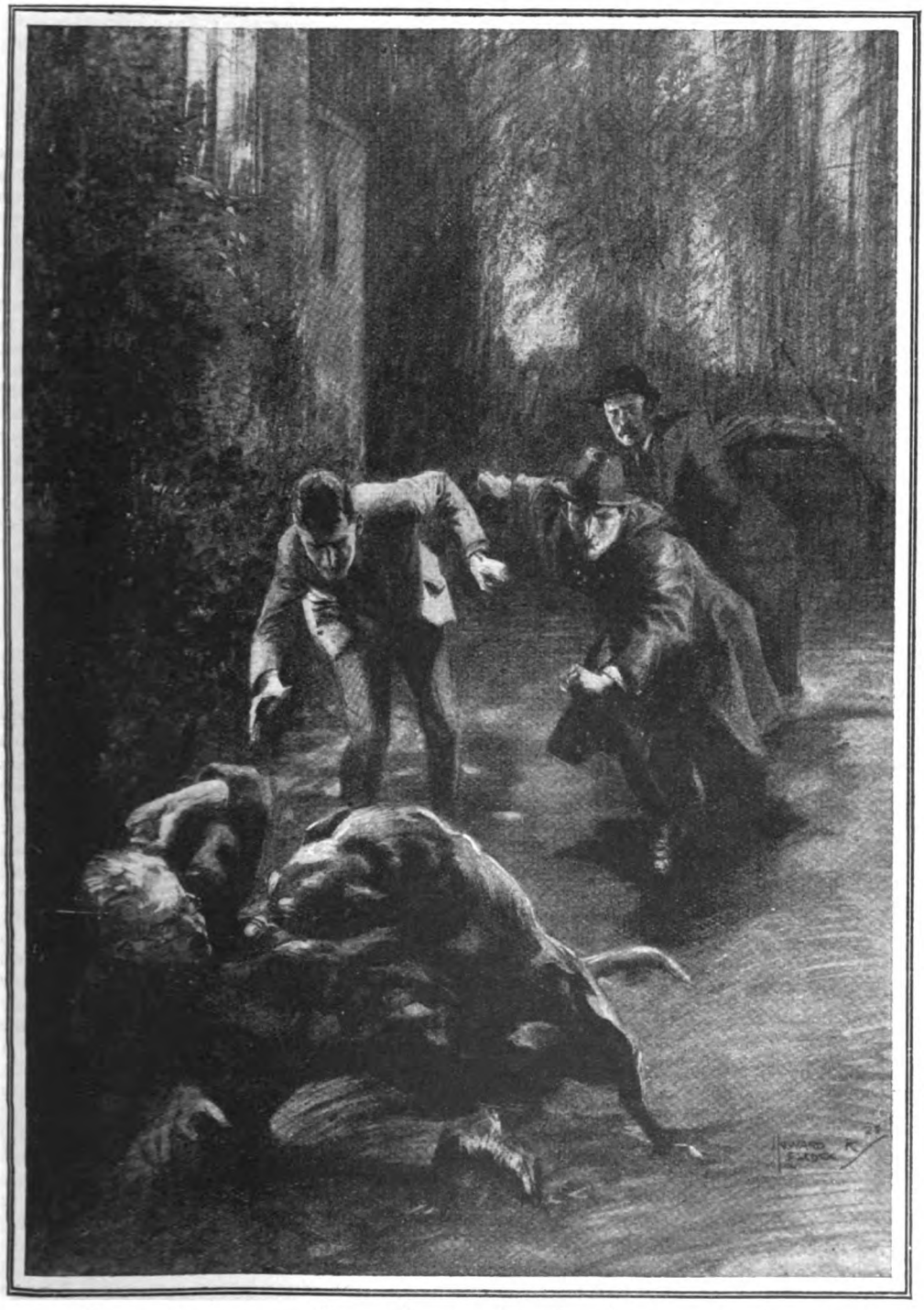
"Thick and horny in a way which is quite new in my experience. Always look at the hands first, Watson. Then cuffs, trouser-knees, and boots. Very curious knuckles which can only be explained by the mode of progression observed by——" Holmes paused, and suddenly clapped his hand to his forehead. "Oh, Watson, Watson, what a fool I have been! It seems incredible, and yet it must be true. All points in one direction. How could I miss seeing the connection of ideas? Those knuckles—how could I have passed those knuckles? And the dog! And the ivy! It's surely time that I disappeared into that little farm of my dreams. Look out, Watson! Here he is! We shall have the chance of seeing for ourselves."

THE hall door had slowly opened, and against the lamp-lit background we saw the tall figure of Professor Presbury. He was clad in his dressing-gown. As he stood outlined in the doorway he was erect but leaning forward with dangling arms, as when we saw him last.

Now he stepped forward into the drive, and an extraordinary change came over him. He sank down into a crouching position, and moved along upon his hands and feet, skipping every now and then as if he were overflowing with energy and vitality. He moved along the face of the house and then round the corner. As he disappeared Bennett slipped through the hall door and softly followed him.

"Come, Watson, come!" cried Holmes, and we stole as softly as we could through the bushes until we had gained a spot whence we could see the other side of the house, which was bathed in the light of the half-moon. The Professor was clearly visible crouching at the foot of the ivy-covered wall. As we watched him he suddenly began with incredible agility to ascend it. From branch to branch he sprang, sure of foot and firm of grasp, climbing apparently in mere joy at his own powers, with no definite object in view. With his dressing-gown flapping on each side of him he looked like some huge bat glued against the side of his own house, a great square dark patch upon the moonlit wall. Presently he tired of this amusement, and, dropping from branch to branch, he squatted down into the old attitude and moved towards the stables, creeping along in the same strange way as before. The wolf-hound was out now, barking furiously, and more excited than ever when it actually caught sight of its master. It was straining on its chain, and quivering with eagerness and rage. The Professor squatted down very deliberately just out of reach of the hound, and began to provoke it in every possible way. He took handfuls of pebbles from the drive and threw them in the dog's face, prodded him with a stick which he had picked up, flicked his hands about only a few inches from the gaping mouth, and endeavoured in every way to increase the animal's fury, which was already beyond all control. In all our adventures I do not know that I have ever seen a more strange sight than this impassive and still dignified figure crouching frog-like upon the ground and goading to a wilder exhibition of passion the maddened hound, which ramped and raged in front of him, by all manner of ingenious and calculated cruelty.

And then in a moment it happened! It was not the chain that broke, but it was the collar that slipped, for it had been made for a thick-necked Newfoundland. We heard the rattle of falling metal, and the next instant dog and man were rolling on the ground together, the one roaring in rage, the other screaming in a strange shrill falsetto of terror. It was a very narrow thing for the Professor's life. The savage creature had him fairly by the throat, its fangs had bitten deep, and he was senseless before we could reach them and drag the two apart. It might have been a dangerous task for us, but Bennett's voice and pressure brought the great wolf-hound instantly to reason. The uproar had brought the sleepy and astonished coachman from his room above the stables. "I'm not surprised," said he, shaking his head. "I've seen him at it before. I knew the dog would get him sooner or later."



Dog and man were rolling on the ground together, the one roaring in rage, the other screaming in a strange shrill falsetto of terror.

The hound was secured, and together we carried the Professor up to his room, where Bennett, who had a medical degree, helped me to dress his torn throat. The sharp teeth had passed dangerously near the carotid artery, and the hæmorrhage was serious. In half an hour the danger was past, I had given the patient an injection of morphia, and he had sunk into deep sleep. Then, and only then, were we able to look at each other and to take stock of the situation.

"I think a first-class surgeon should see him," said I.

"For God's sake, no!" cried Bennett. "At present the scandal is confined to our own household. It is safe with us. If it gets beyond these walls it will never stop. Consider his position at the University, his European reputation, the feelings of his daughter."

"Quite so," said Holmes. "I think it may be quite possible to keep the matter to ourselves, and also to prevent its recurrence now that we have a free hand. The key from the watch-chain, Mr. Bennett. Macphail will guard the patient and let us know if there is any change. Let us see what we can find in the Professor's mysterious box."

THERE was not much, but there was enough—an empty phial, another nearly full, a hypodermic syringe, several letters in a crabbed, foreign hand. The marks on the envelopes showed that they were those which had disturbed the routine of the secretary, and each was dated from the Commercial Road and signed "A. Dorak." They were mere invoices to say that a fresh bottle was being sent to Professor Presbury, or receipts to acknowledge money. There was one other envelope, however, in a more educated hand and bearing the Austrian stamp with the postmark of Prague. "Here we have our material!" cried Holmes, as he tore out the enclosure.

"*Honoured Colleague,*" it ran. "*Since your esteemed visit I have thought much of your case, and though in your circumstances there are some special reasons for the treatment, I would none the less enjoin caution, as my results have shown that it is not without danger of a kind.*

"*It is possible that the Serum of Anthropoid would have been better. I have, as I explained to you, used black-faced Langur because a specimen was accessible. Langur is, of course, a crawler and climber, while Anthropoid walks erect, and is in all ways nearer.*

"*I beg you to take every possible precaution that there be no premature revelation of the process. I have one other client in England, and Dorak is my agent for both.*

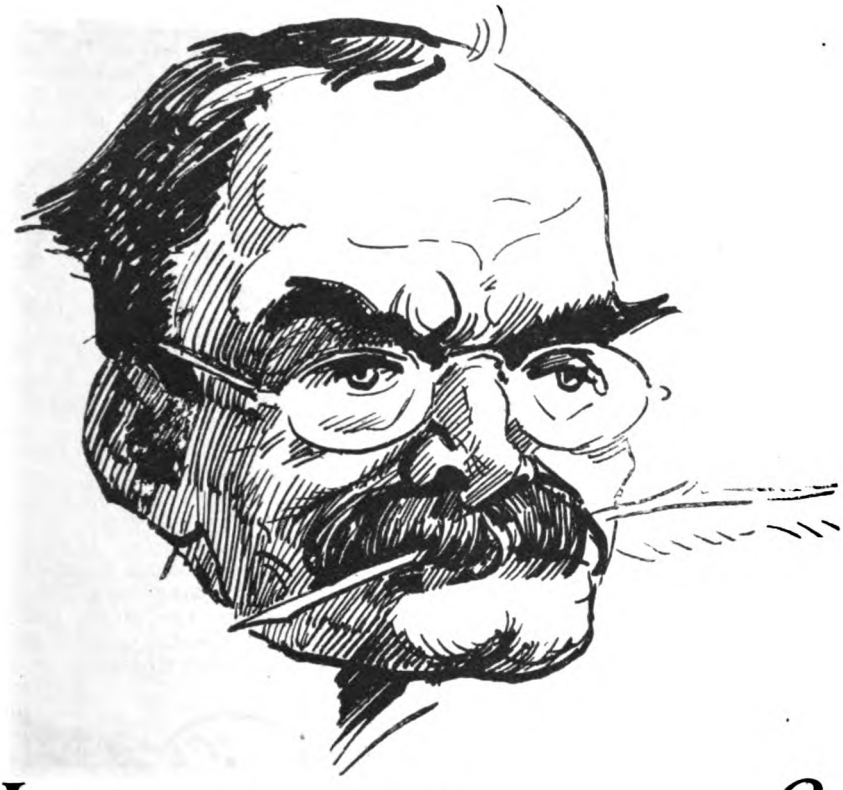
"*Weekly reports will oblige.*

"*Yours with high esteem,*

"H. LOWENSTEIN."

Lowenstein! The name brought back to me the memory of some snippet from a newspaper which spoke of an obscure scientist who was striving in some unknown way for the secret of rejuvenescence and the elixir of life. Lowenstein of Prague! Lowenstein with the wondrous strength-giving serum, tabooed by the profession because he refused to reveal its source. In a few words I said what I remembered. Bennett had taken a manual of Zoology from the shelves. "'Langur,'" he read, "'the great black-faced monkey of the Himalayan slopes, biggest and most human of climbing monkeys.' Many details are added. Well, thanks to you, Mr. Holmes, it is very clear that we have traced the evil to its source."

"The real source," said Holmes, "lies, of course, in that untimely love affair which gave our impetuous Professor the idea that he could only gain his wish by turning himself into a younger man. When one tries to rise above Nature one is liable to fall below it. The highest type of man may revert to the animal if he leaves the straight road of destiny." He sat musing for a little with the phial in his hand, looking at the clear liquid within. "When I have written to this man and told him that I hold him criminally responsible for the poisons which he circulates, we will have no more trouble. But it may recur. Others may find a better way. There is danger there—a very real danger to humanity. Consider, Watson, that the material, the sensual, the worldly would all prolong their worthless lives. The spiritual would not avoid the call to something higher. It would be the survival of the least fit. What sort of cesspool may not our poor world become?" Suddenly the dreamer disappeared, and Holmes, the man of action, sprang from his chair. "I think there is nothing more to be said, Mr. Bennett. The various incidents will now fit themselves easily into the general scheme. The dog, of course, was aware of the change far more quickly than you. His smell would ensure that. It was the monkey, not the Professor, whom Roy attacked, just as it was the monkey who teased Roy. Climbing was a joy to the creature, and it was a mere chance, I take it, that the pastime brought him to the young lady's window. There is an early train to town, Watson, but I think we shall just have time for a cup of tea at the Chequers before we catch it."



Impressions of Rudyard Kipling

I.—By HARRY FURNISS.

RUDYARD KIPLING owed something of his early success in England to the mystery by which he was surrounded. His fame was great, and preceded him from India. Like Disraeli, he did not seek the limelight.

When I first arrived in London I lived for a year or two in a private hotel in Thavies Inn. My hostess, a charming lady, was of very artistic tastes, and among her guests I met many interesting people. Those whom I recollect most clearly were a Mr. and Mrs. Kipling, from Lahore. Mrs. Kipling was, I believe, a connection of Sir Edward Burne-Jones—and a most fascinating and witty conversationalist. Her descriptions of India, her views on art, were delightfully instructive to a youth of nineteen. With beautiful eyes and a charming expression, I thought her the most fascinating of ladies. She was the mother of Rudyard Kipling. I remember one day Mrs. Kipling showing me with pride a photograph of her precocious son, then a boy of eight or nine, standing on a chair.

A characteristic of Kipling that never fails to arouse my admiration is his courage. He has no timidity. He writes of the world as he finds it. I, too, have seen a good deal

of the world. I, too, like to describe with pen and pencil men and women as I find them. And I feel certain that this information gives no offence—for how should it ?—when no offence is intended.

But there is always the danger of being misunderstood—as witness the case of Kipling himself. Some seven or eight years ago I was in the States when Kipling's outspoken criticism and withering sarcasm had given great offence.

Whilst having lunch with a prominent, clever, genial Irish journalist and editor, who was, however, sparsely endowed by Nature with good looks, for his eyes were minute, his nose was short, his face was round and his complexion tinged with yellow, his stature small and his build extremely corpulent, I happened to mention Kipling.

My editorial acquaintance rose, and placing his hands on the table in front of him, as if to make a speech, stuck his nose in the air and remarked with much dignity, "My dear sir, do not mention that man's name in my presence. He had the impertinence to call New York two miles of pig-trough ! "

So that I should not forget this incident —or my editor—I made this rough sketch on the back of my menu.

"But you read his books ? " I ventured to ask.

"Sir, I take my hat off to him as a poet and an author—but as a critic—No ! "

A member of the Press Gallery in the House of Commons, whose name one may safely conjecture will not go down to posterity, once said to me :—

"Gladstone and I are very much alike. We are both great eaters and great sleepers."

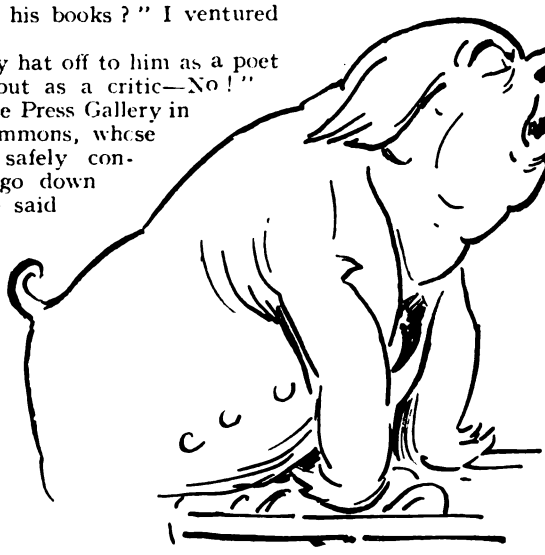
In the same way I might conclude Kipling and I are very much alike. We both have good memories. Kipling's memory for detail is astounding. At least, I gather it must be so, from an incident which happened at a banquet given in memory of the great novelist, Thackeray, in the Temple. Thackeray, it may be mentioned, was a member of the Temple. And this was the most representative gathering of celebrities connected with the Law, with Literature, Art, and Science. I presume that I was invited because I had lately completed the Centenary Edition of Thackeray (named after me), and as a compliment to my work for the drawings and preface that I had supplied.

On that never-to-be-forgotten occasion I found myself sandwiched between two legal luminaries. One of my neighbours said that on his way to the Great Hall he passed the tents in which the annual Flower Shows had taken place. He observed, to his great astonishment, in the grounds a swarm of bees. He declared it to be a most extraordinary occurrence.

"I have never seen bees in the Temple before," he remarked, "and I am puzzled to know how, and by what means, they got there."

Kipling, who was seated opposite, leant forward and said :—

"I think I can tell you something concerning that very swarm. If you look up the *Bee-Lover's Gazette* " (I am not certain if I have the correct name, but it was certainly something very like that) "of July two years ago, on the last page, half way down the second column, you will find a paragraph about a barrister in the Temple who keeps bees. No doubt the swarm you saw this evening belongs to the same man."



"My dear sir, do not mention Kipling's name in my presence. He had the impertinence to call New York two miles of pig-trough ! "

The sketch made by Mr. Furniss on the back of the menu.

I once wrote an article on the subject of "How Workers Work," in which I said :—

"Perhaps no man has, more literally, taken off his coat to work than Rudyard Kipling. A friend of mine, who saw a good deal of him in Africa during the Boer War, and who, for a short time, assisted him in the journal published by war correspondents, tells me that Kipling was a most wonderful worker. With plenty of paper and ink before him, his pipe alight, he would get an idea, and then, if writing verse, a tune to help out the idea, accompanying himself by tapping the table with his fingers ; once started, the whole theme was in his mind, the rhythm perfect, the result marvellous."

My first personal meeting with Rudyard Kipling took place a quarter of a century after I met his parents, and he had become famous. I happened to be in the train travelling up to London from Sussex, in which county we both were—and still are—living. I introduced myself to him by asking after his parents, and he responded with charming enthusiasm. I may at once say that, in all my journeys round the world, a more delightful travelling companion than the great author and poet I have never met. I had drawn Kipling many times from photographs, but I had never seen him in life before, except for that very fleeting glimpse at the Thackeray anniversary. It was not his bushy eyebrows, nor the glasses, nor the moustache, nor all these features together that made me certain at first glance it was Kipling. Recent portraits had led me to expect a much older and more worn man; the feature I knew could only be Kipling's was the chin with the split in the centre—a prominent chin signifying strength.

Another Impression: An imitation of the latest style in caricaturing.

We touched on many topics—at least, I touched and Kipling talked, and what a talker he was! Crisp as his prose, incisive as his verse, amusing as his fancies, inexhaustible as his pen. Here was the man, not to be approached intellectually, pouring out ideas and impressions in a fresh, vigorous stream which one never finds in the jaded Clubman, no matter how clever he may be. Kipling's exclusiveness is his strength. His mind, like a stream that has trickled peacefully over the pebbles in the fresh, open country, is naturally different from the heated, artificial outpouring of the town wit. This simile reminds me of Kipling's raptures over the picturesque. "Ye gods, what scenery one enjoys in Southern France!" (He had just returned from a visit there.) "Did you ever visit——?" (The name has escaped my memory.) "No? Then you must. It is a dead village on the top of a wonderful plateau—every house, every deserted mansion, is a picture, and when I looked over the rock and found crustations which I always thought was the work of the devil—in other words, the jerry-builder—I found the wind—the wind alone had made these.

"You know, when I go to a gaff—which I seldom do—I always take more interest in the scenery than in the actors. I do not think scene-painters are made enough of. It is a great art."

We then discussed scene-painting, and I told him some of the tricks of the trade and gave it as my opinion that the stage-carpenter had displaced the artist with real trees and real water.

"That reminds me," Kipling broke in. "You knew Irving well. I didn't, but I felt what a great man he was if only by one incident. I was present at a performance at the Lyceum—Tennyson's *Cup*, I think—and Irving, in his peculiar, jerky, impulsive manner, accidentally pulled up a small tree by the roots. There was a titter. Any other actor would have been at a loss to know what to do, but not Irving. He quickly *planted it again*, and went on with the play.

"Beerholm Tree is a wonderful man," he continued. "I heard that a few evenings ago he recited Hamlet's soliloquy, 'To be or not to be,' as if Falstaff was speaking it. There is a theory, which I have always felt to be a true one, that the only character in Shakespeare who understood Hamlet, though he never met him, was Falstaff. The two characters are exact—only Falstaff is fat. Forget his fatness and, as Falstaff, recite 'Hamlet,' and you will see that there is not the length of this cigarette between them."

This theory was too novel to follow, so we switched off to Thackeray. I asked him point-blank what he thought of Thackeray. He raised his eyes and hands in admiration. "Thackeray? A great master! Say what they like, he was great! There is a lot of meat in Thackeray. One need not read his tirades to the reader—that is an

Early-Victorian style of writing that may weary one nowadays. Skip those, and what everlasting pleasure there is in his reading.

"Dickens! There was a craftsman—young writers nowadays may belittle him, but one and all may learn—perhaps unconsciously—from Dickens. He was good in every line, descriptive, dramatic, pathetic. Epigram, short story, everything he had at his finger-ends. By the way, did you ever notice one peculiarity about Dickens? He never had any light in his scenes. Everything is dark. His horizons are low, his interiors so dark—one candle in a room—that a generation hence the artist will not know how to illustrate his darkness at all. Still, like the London he loved, we have to put up with the darkness and love him still."

At the time I was illustrating the Centenary Edition of Thackeray I again travelled from the country to London with Kipling. He was interested when I told him that I had some of the drawings with me.

"What have you made of Becky Sharp?" he asked. I showed him. "That is not what I thought Becky to be like," he remarked. "I believed her to be a short-nosed, dark little thing."

To which I replied that she certainly was not the Becky whom Thackeray drew with his pencil, but my idea of the Becky Sharp whom he drew with his pen. In his usual careless way as an artist he gave an utterly false impression of his own most famous character; and actresses, artists, and everyone else have followed him in this erroneous representation.

"To begin with, Becky was not altogether English; her mother was French. Her features could not have been those of her drunken father—she was attractive, pale, sandy-haired, with very large eyes, and she was Jewish, and therefore certainly had not a short nose. She was wicked, and this I have tried to show in the drawing of her eyes. I have always observed that the wickedest eye in woman is the light grey iris and the dark pupil."

"I never heard that before," broke in Kipling; "dark pupil and light grey iris!—that is new to me, by Jove! So that was Becky, was it?"

We, by a coincidence, journeyed back from London in the same carriage that afternoon, and Kipling informed me that he had had a most enjoyable lunch at the Athenæum Club that day. There happened to be sitting at his table a number of literary acquaintances, and he brought Becky Sharp into the conversation and ventilated my theory of her as his own. "And what is more, I left them at it!" he added.

II.—By E. P. KINSELLA.

WHEN I knew that I was to meet Rudyard Kipling I praised my luck exceedingly. Many writers compel a willing admiration of their work. A very few—the princes of story-telling—command the reader's eager worship for the life and colour and magic they put into the printed page. For me, as for many others, Kipling was of those few.

I was to work with him, and that seemed better still.

The commission to work on the technical side of the film of a Kipling story, "The Gate of a Hundred Sorrows," came through my old friend Randolph Lewis, the American scenario expert. I was to do a poster for the film, make models under Kipling's supervision, sketches of native costumes and the like, according to his directions.

I have a memory of being a little nervous at our first meeting. I need not have been. Kipling gave me one sustained glance—I shall never be able to imagine him without those big glinting spectacles—and decided that I would do. From then on it was strenuous work: work that under Kipling's unwearying enthusiasm for the job in hand became in my view strenuous and delightful play. Kipling had the gift of making it seem like that to me. It was a hurrying play-time with the work never for an instant out of sight. Everything had to be not only right, but just right. The let it go doctrine of "That'll do" was no manner of use to Kipling—and no manner of use to me after my first hour in his company.

"I'll tell you the secret of success, Kinsella," he said once. "It's always to do a little better than the next man—and to give good measure."

From beginning to end I suppose there were close on a hundred and forty models and sketches done for the use and guidance of the producers of the films. There was no single speck in all the dust of detail Kipling did not help and improve, from the exact way of tying a character's sash to the exact pattern of the Mohammedan fretwork decorating a window in Lahore. With fair reason I consider myself a quick thinker—I still hope I am right; but if I am, then you must find some wholly new and ten-powered

adjective for the astonishing speed with which Kipling grasps, surrounds, and settles any point of the work in hand. His swiftness was a lasting and a joyful wonder. Randolph Lewis christened him the Little Master. Working for him, I had taken on a new part in life. I had become (although, again, I hold to it that I am a quick thinker) the man-trying-to-catch-up-with-Kipling. And I shall never wish for a better part.

A friend asked me for my impressions of the man.

A little man, top hat, astrakhan collar, the top light glinting on those big glasses. Always those glinting glasses.

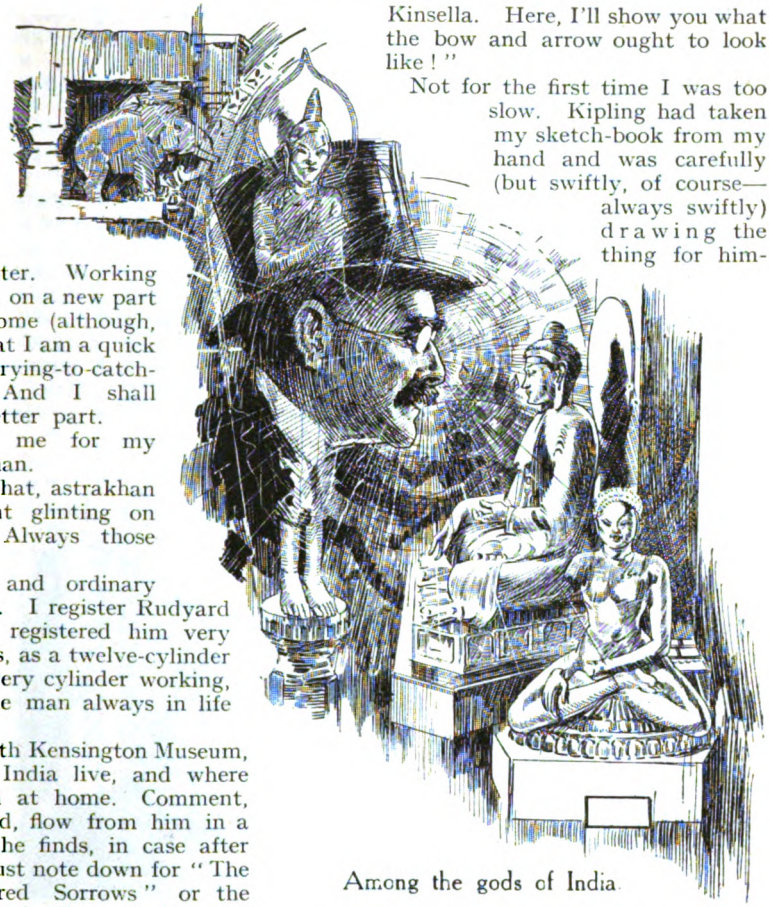
That won't do, and ordinary language will not do. I register Rudyard Kipling now, as I registered him very early in our meetings, as a twelve-cylinder life-machine with every cylinder working, and the spirit of the man always in life and flame.

We met at the South Kensington Museum, where the gods of India live, and where Kipling was a man at home. Comment, knowledge, command, flow from him in a running current as he finds, in case after case, something I must note down for "The Gate of a Hundred Sorrows" or the "Without Benefit of Clergy" films. I hardly halt by any case. I wait rather like a sprinter at the start, all ready to dash on to the next case, busy with sketch-book and pencil all the time. I am the man catching up.

"Get that, Kinsella. She'd wear a cap like that—a coquettish cap, they'd think it there. The feminine is the same all over the world—she'd wear it just as a woman might wear it in France—jauntily set over one eye. And she'd be looking out under the lashes."

I make a rapid sketch of the native cap, I look up, and am surprised he is not there. He is already at a case farther on, beckoning me and pointing out something at the same time. "These are the Hindu drums—you'll have to get these. They look like an hour-glass, pigskin on both ends. And the rhythm of their music sounds like the heart-beats of humanity. And here's something else. Wouldn't it be a good idea if little Tota had a bow and arrow to play with on the roof of Holden's house? I should get one down on paper, I think, Kinsella. Here, I'll show you what the bow and arrow ought to look like!"

Not for the first time I was too slow. Kipling had taken my sketch-book from my hand and was carefully (but swiftly, of course—always swiftly) drawing the thing for himself. A moment later, by the model of a famous tomb, he was making another sketch, to explain exactly the way in which a character would carry the money in his belt.



Among the gods of India

You remember "Without Benefit of Clergy," the story which begins with the native woman's prayer to Holden, Holden who loves her.

"But if it be a girl?"

"Lord of my life, it cannot be! I know God will give us a son—a man-child that shall grow into a man. . . ."

There comes a son, Tota, the wonderful man-child, and Holden and the girl he loves make paradise of the house and the man-child's laughter. There come darkness and the rains, and Tota dies. His mother, Ameera, dies, and laughter goes for ever. All life is darkness now to Holden, and he dare not look upon the house that was paradise. He sends a man with money for the mother of Ameera——

Kipling dropped upon his knees to show us exactly (always exactly) how the messenger

would take the money from his belt, to hand it over. He would, of course, deduct for himself *dustoorie*, "that commission or percentage on the money passing in any cash transaction which in India, with or without any acknowledgment or permission, sticks to the fingers of the agent of payment."

And as he told us "just how," on his knees, he acted the whole thing.

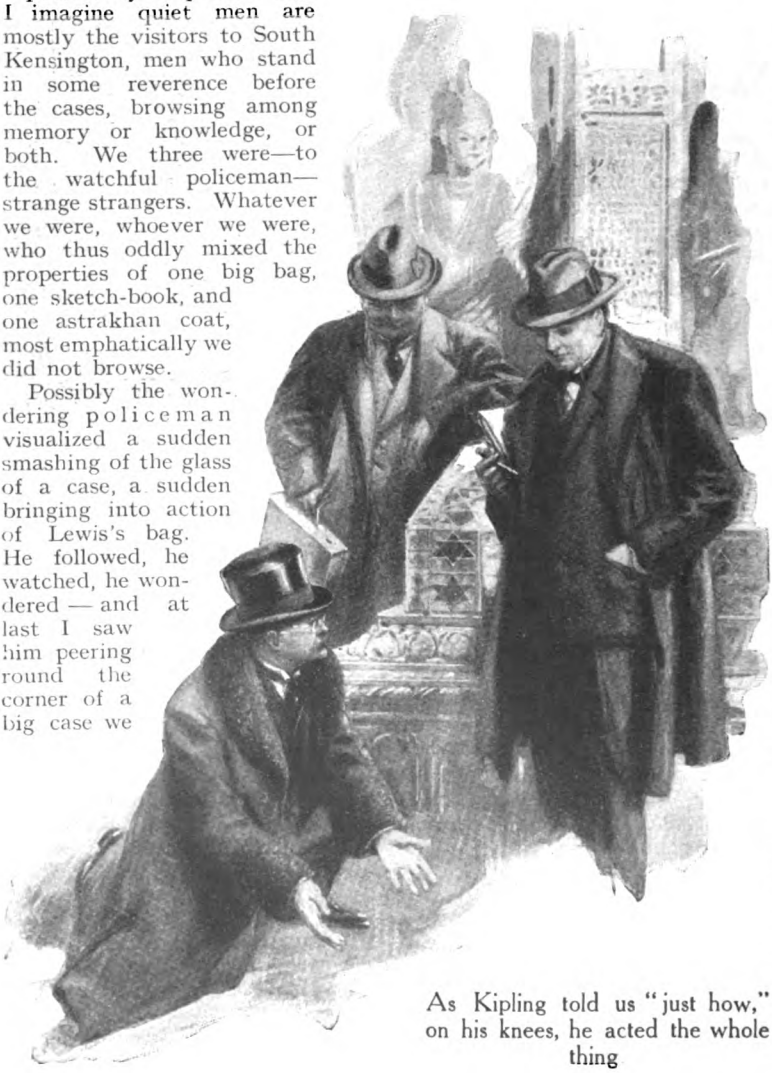
Did I say that on this occasion no notice of Kipling's visit had been given to the officials of the place? Because of this there followed also a young and anxious policeman. Unnoticed by any of us for a long time, he must have been highly suspicious of the speed and eagerness of the little man in the top-hat and the astrakhan coat. Randolph Lewis in the rear carried a potentially iniquitous bag.

I imagine quiet men are mostly the visitors to South Kensington, men who stand in some reverence before the cases, browsing among memory or knowledge, or both. We three were—to the watchful policeman—strange strangers. Whatever we were, whoever we were, who thus oddly mixed the properties of one big bag, one sketch-book, and one astrakhan coat, most emphatically we did not browse.

Possibly the wondering policeman visualized a sudden smashing of the glass of a case, a sudden bringing into action of Lewis's bag. He followed, he watched, he wondered — and at last I saw him peering round the corner of a big case we had used, sketched, and passed. I took in his amazement, his suspicion, his young honesty, and I spoke him fair, as I pointed to Kipling, a South Kensington mile ahead.

"It's all right. That is Mr. Kipling," I whispered; and the policeman answered, "Who's he?"

Upon our next visit to South Kensington it was a different tale. There were frock-coats, a guard of reception, a host of pained regrets that we had not let them know beforehand of Kipling's visit. But I shall keep best in mind that glorious first visit, when we travelled express, until a halt was sounded, and I saw in that tranquil moment the little man with the dancing eyes standing serene and masterful among the gods of India.



As Kipling told us "just how," on his knees, he acted the whole thing

I journeyed in noble company round South Kensington, but there was much more than this for me. I journeyed to the India Kipling knows in the light of the bits of talk he flashed in the intervals of work with him. There were models to be done of courtyards, wells, gates, houses, and with many of them these little illuminations came.

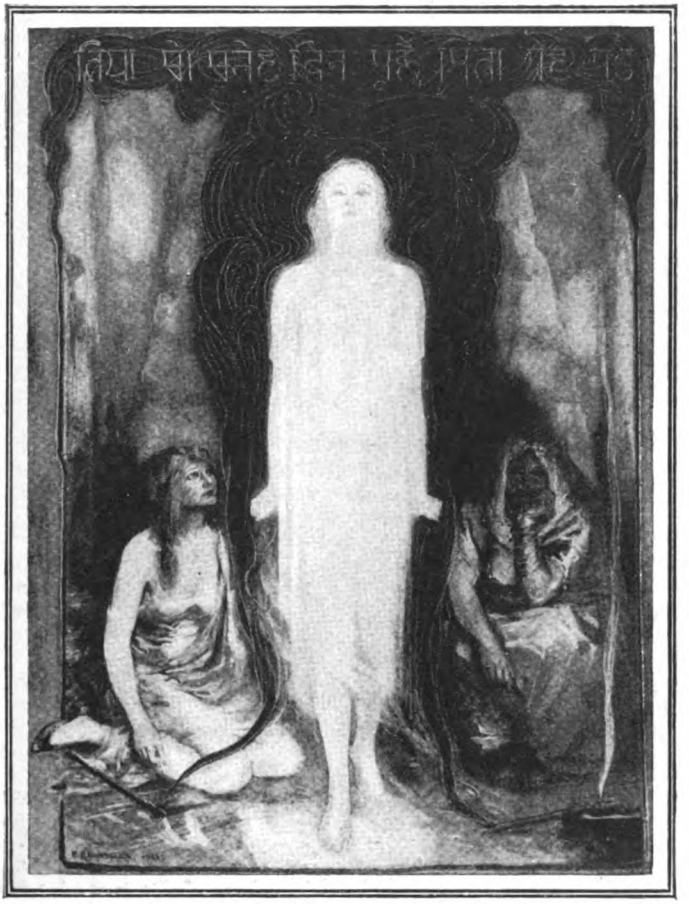
This was the tree where the Soldiers Three held council together and told their yarns. Here was a model of the city of Lahore. I made the very window seat, with the tiny cushions, where Holden sat and looked out over the city and prayed fiercely for the happiness of his tiny son. In this case were the turbans, all types of turbans—Kipling gave the history of each, and the method of tying and

wearing it. He talked of the temple, the model of which next claimed us.

"I scraped the dirt away with my stick, and found it was built of solid silver. In India, beside a beautiful building, you will see an ugly derelict hut. Nobody troubles to destroy it. Nothing matters. Perhaps a man meant to build there. He got as far as the foundations and then abandoned his idea, and went away and forgot all about it."

To Kipling virtue is the doing of the job. A master of craft, that urge to get the very best out of the work in hand displays itself wonderfully in his instructions to me for drawing the poster of "The Gate of a Hundred Sorrows." Nothing must be shadowed or scamped.

"Take especial care that Anne does not look like the repentant Magdalene. On no account put the crucifix on her breast. She stole it, so it is in her hand. Her moral status is exactly that of the penitent thief. Her face is turned towards Ethel, and it is in your business, even in the coarse work of a poster, to get something of its clouded expression.



E. P. Kinsella's poster for "The Gate of a Hundred Sorrows."

"Mother Maturin is not thin, but a voluptuous, honey-coloured Fate. The arm holding up her chin is heavily braceleted, as also is the relaxed right arm, which should rest on her right knee. Her legs are covered to the ankle with deep red or green drapery, and her feet, which are light-coloured and shapely, carry red or green native slippers.

"The outline of the smoke cloud itself touches the overhanging stone above the gate, in the middle, then curving down on either side. I want every gradation in the smoke that you can give, and above all I want the interlacing lines of wreaths of smoke seen edgewise. All the mystery of the symbolism of the play should be hinted at in that same smoke, which is densest and deepest just above Ethel's head, since it is the visible symbol of the weight of the sins which she takes upon her head.

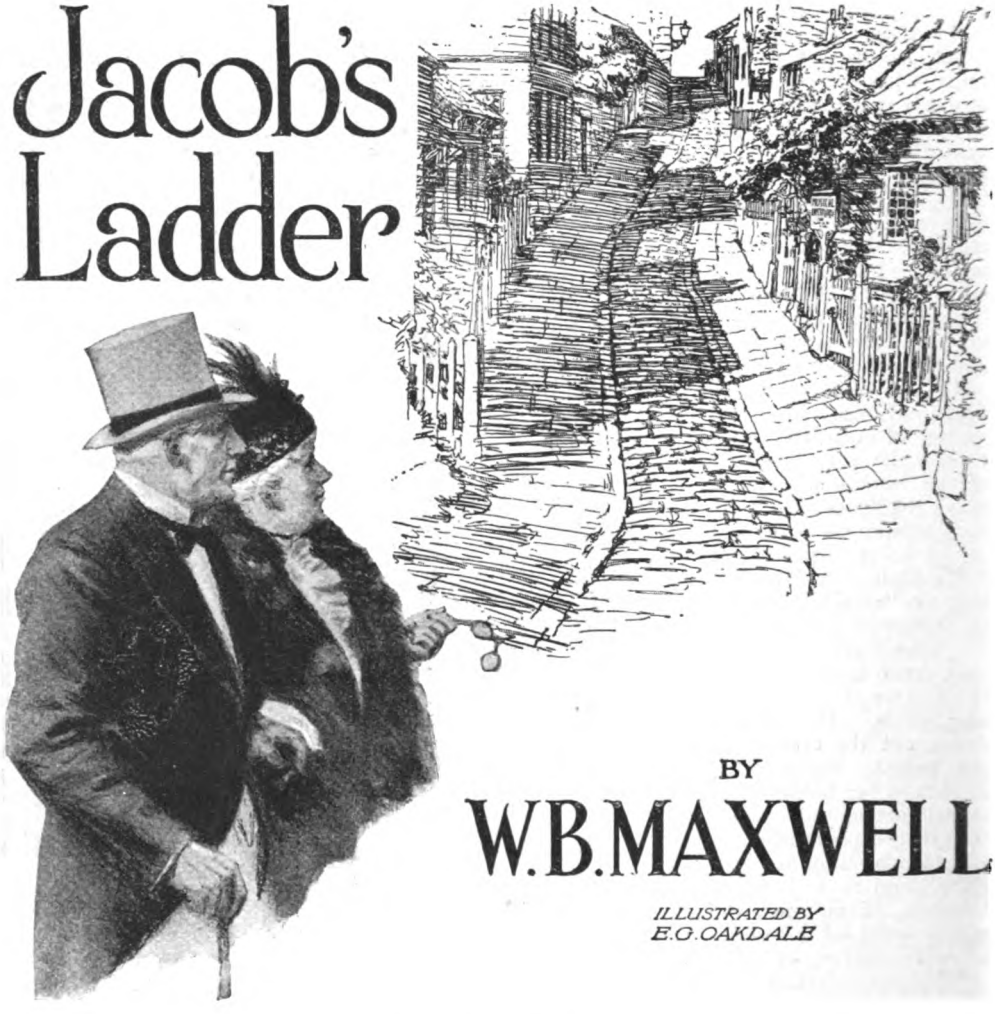
"On second thoughts, it would be best to keep both of Ethel's hands down by her side, as the present attitude is too like a commonplace blessing, whereas her whole attitude is that of a soul under the weight of an accepted burden. Spirit though she is, the first and last note of Ethel Stronnard's figure is *strength*. You would do wrong to put her in a full white spirit light. I suggest some variant of violet, or orange-violet, as more effective."

I have not quoted these instructions in full. But I must give the last few words.

"The rest is for you to work up."

All the models went to Los Angeles, and there, based upon the models, the scenes of the story were built up. That Kipling was satisfied with the result, with my work, delighted me. Above that, it will always delight me to remember that maxim of his I have already given: "The secret of success is to do a little better than the next fellow, and to give good measure."

Jacob's Ladder



BY

W. B. MAXWELL

ILLUSTRATED BY E. G. OAKDALE

IT was the opening of another new dock at a prosperous northern port, and the bright summer day was being kept as a holiday for the whole town. Innumerable people thronged the piers and roadways, the decks of anchored ships, the steps of landing-stages, the balconies and even the roofs of houses. Outside, between the harbour and the open sea, a line of tugs, all dressed with flags, were riding high on the flood tide as they waited to come in.

"Where is Sir John? Is her ladyship ready? Yes, the moment you care to give the signal."

Sir John and Lady Barton, a thin, grey-haired old man and a stout, grey-haired old woman, were the two local potentates who had been summoned to perform this important ceremony. They stood, in the vivid sunshine, with the gentle sea-breeze blowing over their heads, quite close to the dock entrance, just beyond the band and the guard of honour, among a group of official or privileged persons—the robed mayor with his mace-bearer, a clergyman in his surplice, deputy-lieutenants in cocked hats, naval and military officers, harbour-masters, pilots, and so on, accompanied by their wives and daughters. The admiring multitude watched breathlessly. A thousand distant eyes, watching through field-glasses or telescopes, saw the stout lady get rid of her bouquet and knew that she was about to touch the electric button which would set the machinery in motion.

Smoothly, noiselessly, the gigantic gates opened; tongues of foam shot inward, filling the gap; there was a flash like a

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smile, a ripple that sounded like a sigh, and the union was consummated—the waters of the dock had been married to the waters of the sea. The first of the tugs was heading straight in; all the whistles and sirens blew off; the band burst forth with music and the guard presented arms; people waved their hats, shouted, sang; the territorial artillery hidden behind the point half a mile away fired their guns. A little girl in white satin, curtsying very prettily, gave back to Lady Barton her big bouquet of roses—and the thing was done.

As the local newspapers would say, "The worthy baronet and his honoured lady withdrew, to return immediately to Coultas Court. . . . As our readers are well aware, this beautiful mansion and park are situated on the farther slope of Whitepit Moor; but it may be of interest to summer visitors to know that, thanks to the unfailing generosity and public spirit of Sir John and Lady Barton, the extensive grounds as well as the picture gallery and reception-rooms can be inspected free of charge on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays between the hours of," etc.

In fact, although the newspapers did not report it, the old couple made a slight *détour* before taking the direction of their splendid home. They caused themselves first to be driven along the sea-front to the original harbour and basin from which all the magnificence of the modern port had expanded; and here, getting out of the motor-car, they walked up the narrow little street that is known as Jacob's Ladder. It was just such a street as you will find in many old maritime towns, too steep for wheeled traffic, frequented by sailors and fishermen, and inhabited by seafaring people or the shopkeepers who supply their needs—sellers of fishing tackle, ships' furniture, tarpaulin clothing, enormous boots; together with providers of hot meals, sweetstuffs, and even cheap musical instruments. The street and its trade had changed scarcely at all in the last fifty years.

Half-way up it, where it widened into a sort of landing on which you could catch your breath before climbing the remainder of it, these two august visitors paused and scrutinized with tender interest a queer old wooden house and the small triangular yard in front of it. Occupying most of the yard and reclining some of its limbs on the side wall, there was a very old and decrepit mulberry tree.

"That tree lasts well," said Sir John, looking at it with satisfaction. "And the house too. But it wants painting again—or we'll have trouble with those old boards." Then he patted his wife's hand, which lay upon his arm. "Elsie darling, how it always takes us back, doesn't it?"

"It does indeed, Johnnie," said Lady Barton in a gentle, matter-of-fact tone. "Almost makes one feel young again."

They turned away and climbed to the top of Jacob's Ladder, which delivered them presently into a quiet square with the old parish church on one side and modestly dignified Georgian houses, occupied for the most part as places of business, on the three other sides. Their car had driven up the hill by an easier gradient and was waiting for them. Sir John, tilting his white hat to the back of his head and buttoning his morning coat, gave a faint sigh as he looked round at the quiet, red-brick houses; then he got into the car, and as they drove off he patted his wife's hand again and said a few more words about the past.

"Takes me right back, Elsie—back to the very beginning of things."

AT the beginning of things, fifty years ago, Johnnie Barton was a shy lad of twenty-one; and on a summer afternoon, with rain threatening, he came out of one of those red-brick houses—the house that belonged to his father the auctioneer—and idly walked down Jacob's Ladder. Half-way down a heavy storm of rain burst upon him, and he took shelter under the mulberry tree in that small triangular yard. The wooden house behind the tree was at this period occupied by a dealer in musical instruments, an old chap called Godwin; and while Johnnie stood there, with the sharp patter of the rain on the mulberry leaves above his head and an occasional splash coming through them, he heard the tinkle of pianos and the tuning-up of a fiddle.

Then the old man came out and insisted that Johnnie should take shelter inside the shop. Johnnie, with words and manner so diffident as to be almost uncouth, entered the dim, low-beamed place, which had never been intended for a shop at all, and stood there blinking his eyes.

Mr. Godwin called to his daughter, a girl of eighteen, telling her to bring a chair.

"Elsie, find a chair for Mr. Barton. Sit down, Mr. Barton, sir."

"Then you know my name," said Johnnie, blushing, smiling, and seating himself. He was quite absurdly gratified by the fact that Mr. Godwin knew him both by sight and reputation. "I'm surprised at that."

But the old chap said it was very natural; he often saw young Johnnie going up and down the Ladder. "And your father, sir! Very important gentleman, Mr. Barton senior. Highly respected, very well known indeed throughout the town. Your brothers

also. In the business, aren't they, sir? Hope the family are enjoying good health."

The rain continuing, Johnnie sat there talking for an hour at least. Miss Elsie, the daughter, went on with her work, tuning another fiddle and mending a concertina; while Mrs. Godwin, a fat, placid sort of woman, once or twice emerged from the adjoining kitchen, where she was busy.

Johnnie made friends with these people, and returned there again and again, but never said a word about it to anybody.

They welcomed him, valued him, thought a lot of him; whereas at his highly respectable home he had constant sensations of being looked down upon; he was less than nobody there—a pariah. There was no room for him in the business, and his father would often say before his face, "I wish you'd tell me what I'm to do with that boy of mine. He's twenty-one, but with no more notion of making his way in the world than a baby." Then if anyone suggested that he might be sent to the Colonies, the auctioneer brothers, both much older than he, mocked at him, saying, "Johnnie would let himself get eaten by lions, or allow himself to be overtaken by a three-toed sloth. Johnny isn't wide awake enough for rough countries." And his widowed sister, who lived with them, would laugh immoderately at these gibes, and swing herself laughing in the rocking-chair. Even his mother, doing her crochet-work in the corner armchair, smiled and did not defend him. It was this sort of thing that made him so shy and diffident.

Then what a delightful contrast, in the jolly shop, or in the parlour behind it, to hear Mr. Godwin's flattering turns of speech—such as, "There's something I've never properly understood. Now, sir, will you enlighten me? . . . Ah, thank you, sir! What a thing a fine liberal education is, to be sure! What power and influence it gives to a gentleman! I wish you'd write a letter to the newspapers embodying all what you've just told me. It would do good, sir."

HERE, then, Johnnie was the patron, the honoured guest, for the first time in his life being encouraged and listened to with deference. Of course he enjoyed himself, as well as really liking his entertainers.

The old man was a simple kindly creature, in truth as good as gold, with an avid thirst for knowledge that had been given to him by a smatter of book-learning; but Johnnie Barton soon saw that he did not know much about music—merely enough to sell concertinas to sailors or let out pianos on hire to lodging-house keepers; and perhaps he might not have made a great fist even of this if he had not had the girl Elsie to help him. Elsie was clever, could play beautifully on anything in the shop. While her father talked, Johnnie sometimes observed her, noticing her pretty but untidy hair and her brown eyes, of which the thoughtfulness or dreaminess seemed strange in combination with her alert businesslike manner and her swift skilful movements. Johnnie wondered if the dreaminess came from the long night of those northern lands where her ancestors had dwelt; for Mr. Godwin boasted that he had Scandinavian blood in his veins.

But he boasted more of being an Englishman. "England—that's a grand word, sir. When I hear of anything mean or underhand—yes, or the poor being downtrodden by the rich—I say, 'That's not England!' Bother the politics, I say. Fair play—give us all our chance—let's stand shoulder to shoulder—we're *English*. But it's you gentlemen—born and bred and educated—that have got to lead us, sir, and govern us. Don't never throw us back on the ignorant riff-raff."

And Johnnie in effect promised that he never would, easily assuming the air of a person who belonged to the privileged governing classes and who might soon be called to perform the duties of his high station.

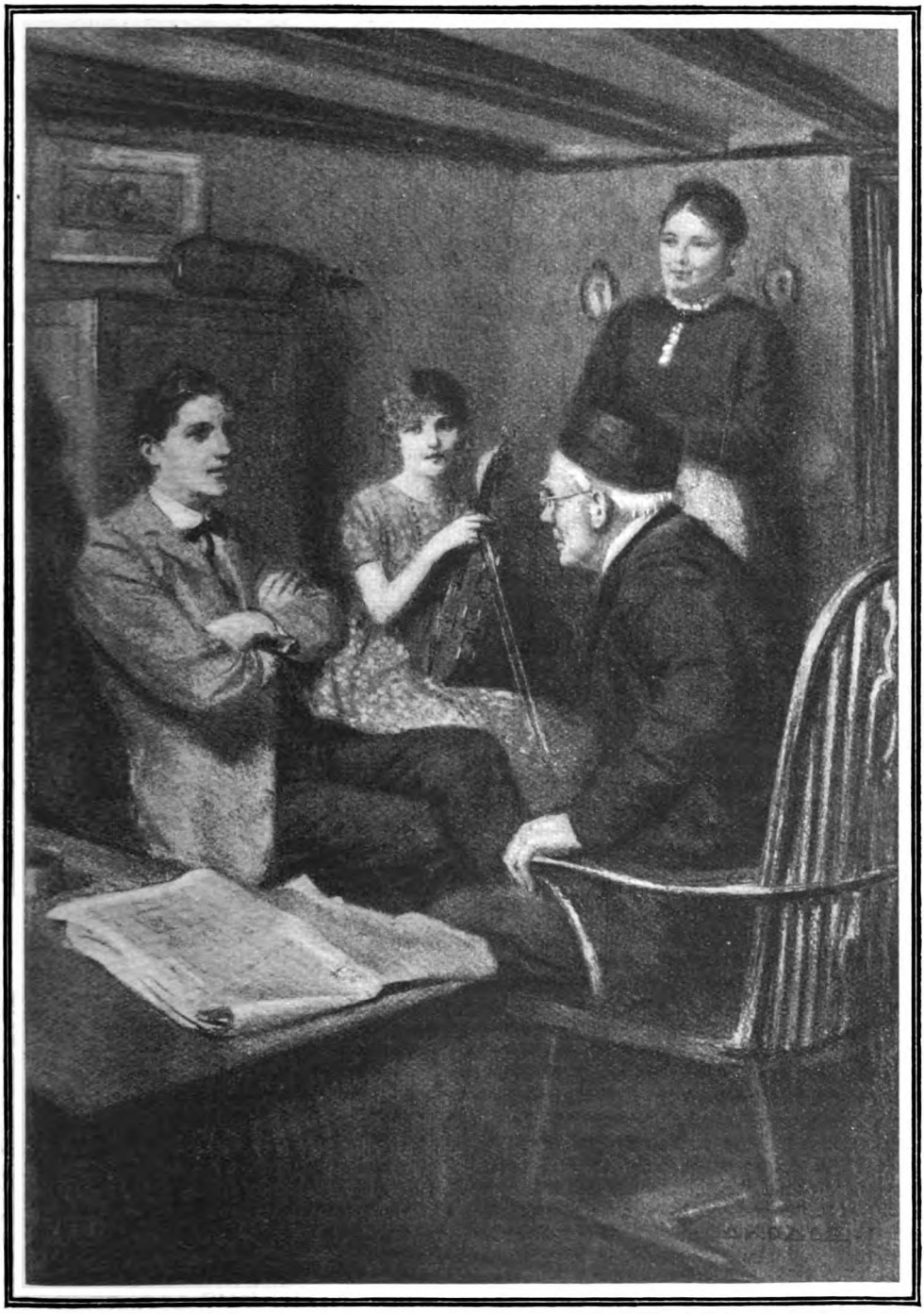
Nowadays he often spent the entire evening in the parlour behind the shop, and one night after meekly receiving his pocket-money at home he bought with the bulk of it a bottle of wine and presented it to his host. They were merry in the parlour that night. Mr. Godwin, voluble, more and more excited, talked so much that no one else could get a word in edgeways. The calm stout mother sat sipping a glass of the wine and smiled and nodded. But Elsie would have none of the wine.

At the end of the evening she escorted Johnnie through the shop, out into the yard, and there in the darkness by the mulberry tree she asked him not to bring any more alcoholic presents.

"Mr. Barton, I know you mean nothing but kindness to us—so I'm sure you won't mind my telling you. But—but wine isn't good for father. Perhaps you noticed its effect on him. Once, a long while ago——" And she stopped speaking.

He could not see the colour of her face in the darkness, but he knew that she had flushed because she hated being forced to say these things about her father; and he, too, grew hot and red, feeling ashamed of himself because he had forced her to say them.

He apologized for his thoughtlessness,



"England—that's a grand word, sir," said the old man. "When I hear of anything mean or underhand I say, 'That's not England!'"

and she thanked him. And in this moment he knew intuitively and yet certainly, by some vibration of her voice, some gentle strength in its tone or the unexpectedly deepened note it struck, that old Godwin, although so good, was essentially incapable of conducting his own life; that the old woman was much the same; that both of them were really in Elsie's care and charge. The child had made the two parents her children. He went away thinking about it. He thought it very touching and beautiful.

"What have you been doing with yourself?" said his father, in the contemptuous style that was usual at home.

'Oh, nothing in particular," said Johnnie, absent-mindedly.

After this, when he took a present to his friends, it consisted of sweets or cakes, and as they sat round the table nibbling his dainties and drinking lemonade made by Elsie, Mr. Godwin let the guest do most of the talking.

Johnnie talked and talked, more and more, finding the greatest pleasure in the sound of his own voice after the long home-silence. He talked as well as he could—about poetry, philosophy, politics—anything and everything. He charmed old Godwin with a synopsis of Carlyle's great message; especially enchanting them with his description of "the eternal No"; saying how a man "finds himself"; how a man feels rather than thinks, "This thing shall not be. I, small and weak as I am, oppose myself to the universe and say, 'It shall not be.' No—the everlasting No of the spirit of man."

Elsie's brown eyes glowed as she listened. "That's fine," she said, simply. "I like that."

IT must be confessed that Johnnie, striving for further effect, boasted and bragged too. It was wrong and silly of him to do so; but very shy young men often have this little failing, and his excuse must be that he had suffered a rather cruel repression up to now. He told them he had not yet mapped his future. He would probably first of all go into Parliament for the purpose of redressing grievances, amending defects in our laws, and raising the ethical standards of public life. For the rest—well, time would show. All this was a regrettable but by no means unusual access of childish vainglory; and in fact he regretted it, feeling ashamed, and saying to himself, "How *can* I have blown my own trumpet so disgustingly?" But the temptation was great, and he yielded to it again, and yet again. It was so delicious to have them hanging on his words, applauding him, looking up to him.

Then, one afternoon, returning to this too indulgent audience after an abstention of several days, he found old Godwin in a painful state of indignation and distress. Godwin and many of his neighbours had received notice to quit. It appeared that his house belonged to the town, the lease had long since expired, he was merely a tenant at will; and this was the case in regard to most of the other houses. But these people had never contemplated the danger of being turned out. It appeared also—as was already known to every important person in the town, except Johnnie—that there was a scheme for making big docks to the south of the existing harbour, and Jacob's Ladder with some adjacent streets was to be swept away entirely, to give space for the railway lines and broad new terraced roads.

"But how can I go?" cried poor Mr. Godwin, terribly excited and agitated. "How can I set up business anywhere else? I should be ruined—it'd mean the workhouse to all of us."

He grasped Johnnie's arm and took him down the Ladder, stopping at the doors of his neighbours, who came out with anxious perturbed faces, and saying excitedly, "This is Mr. Barton. Mr. Barton hadn't even heard of it till I told him five minutes ago."

Everywhere it was the same story. They told Johnnie that their fathers and grandfathers had lived here, that theirs was a trade impossible to move, that if they were driven away from here it would be the end of the world to them.

Godwin took him back to the music shop, where he sat in the parlour and listened to the old man's laments, with the mother and daughter standing by.

"Can't be, sir—mustn't be done. Why, it's not England. No, it's not England, to treat poor folk so cruelly"; and he brandished one hand in the air and with the other rumpled his shock of grey hair. "No, it would be too bad."

Then he explicitly appealed to Johnnie for protection and help.

No words could plumb the depth of Johnnie's pain and shame; he sat there blushing and blinking his eyes, feeling like a most pitiful little impostor publicly exposed, a poor naked crow with all the eagle's feathers in a moment torn from it. He stammered out that he had no power, no influence; he only wished that he *could* help.

"Oh!" Surprised, the old man had drawn back a step and was looking at him. "Oh, sir, you can help if you *will* help. That stands to reason."

The mother was looking at him too.

"It's a liberty," she said, "that we take in asking. But, sir, it's our need that drives us. Who else will help us if you refuse? We have no other powerful friends."

Elsie never spoke. But she also had looked at Johnnie, and in the expression of her face he saw not only surprise but contempt. After that one look she held her head averted from him.

"Of course I'll do my best," he said, desperately.

He went away feeling most miserable. It is a dreadful sensation just when you have ceased to be a child, when you have passed from adolescence into early manhood—that sensation of complete impotence. Oh, why had he posed as a personage; why, with all his vanity and boastfulness, had he persuaded those people to believe in him? Moreover, apart from the horrid personal humiliation, he was bitterly sorry for his kind friends and very wrathful against those who wished to oppress them.

After dinner he summoned sufficient courage to speak to his father about "the evictions," as he called them; saying how he knew one of the tenants, and so on.

His father, scarcely raising his eyes from the newspaper in front of him, said that individual hardships cannot stand in the way of public improvement, and so forth; but then, as his son went on talking, he stopped reading and listened with attention. Presently he turned, smiling, to the others, and said, "Listen, all of you. This is rather good." And the married sister began to swing in the rocking-chair, and Mrs. Barton looked up from her crochet. "Master Johnnie here doesn't approve of the new docks—at any rate, in the position that has been chosen for them. So, if you please, he intends to prevent them being built there."

"I didn't say that," and Johnnie rose and moved towards the door. "I said I intended to try. Good night."

But instead of going to bed he went out into the square and walked up and down by the churchyard wall. He thought of the unjustness and tyranny in sweeping into ruin a lot of kindly humble people for the doubtful advantage of the callous community. He thought of them all, those little shopkeepers on Jacob's Ladder, anxious and unhappy to-night because of the menace; but naturally he thought most of his particular friends, the friends who had asked him to protect them—the old man with the rumpled shock of grey hair, the hitherto calm but now perturbed stout old woman, and the brown-eyed girl who had them in her charge as her two children. He seemed to see Miss Elsie's face looking at him again with an astonishment that changed to contempt.

And gradually a wonderful new courage awoke in him. It was as if he had "found himself," or as if he had evoked the Carlylean everlasting No of which he had prated. He, small and weak as he was, would oppose the universe, saying with every fibre of his body and every energy of his soul, "No, it shall not be." The determination made him feel no longer small, but solid and high as the church tower—the determination to prevent this unjust act or die in the attempt.

TWO days later one of the local newspapers published a long letter denouncing the dock scheme. Next day thirty or forty people made a demonstration in front of the town-hall. On the day after that Mr. Barton senior, going on business down Harbour Lane, found a crowd by the quay. A man was haranguing them and being cheered. It was Johnnie: rather shrill, but very much in earnest, and very much to the taste of his audience.

The same evening Mr. Barton told him he was making them all ridiculous, and ordered him to desist.

"I think you have taken leave of your senses," said Mr. Barton, angrily. "D'you know what you're up against? About a hundred millions sterling!" And he spoke of the various interests involved—the two railway companies, the new dock company, not to mention trifles like the municipality and the harbour board.

A quarrel ensued, and Mr. Barton said if Johnnie was disobedient he should not remain under that roof.

Johnnie left the roof early next morning amid the lamentations of his mother. The Godwins had a spare bedroom, and he lived with them. A fish salesman at the harbour cleared out a room, and gave it to him for his office. It was there that he sat receiving visitors, organizing the campaign, writing more letters to the newspapers. With funds subscribed in sixpences and shillings he caused to be erected in front of the mulberry tree an enormous board on which were painted two gigantic words: "Naboth's Vineyard." This device attracted attention. People stood gaping at it, and old Godwin was always there, excitedly explaining that it was Biblical—that it meant the rich oppressor hungering after the poor man's little plot of ground.

Always, too, the general excitement was increasing. The other local newspaper took up the cry; the big northern papers followed, and then the London Press. Those demonstrations at the town-hall grew bigger, until they culminated in a torchlight pro-

cession and a riot. Johnnie and some others were arrested, lodged in jail, brought before the magistrates, and after a remand, perhaps because of the vast yelling crowd outside the courthouse and perhaps because of there being no case against them, they were discharged. So to speak, Johnnie had got the best of it in the first round, but the fight was not over.

He said this at night to Elsie Godwin, when she rescued him from his cheering admirers, pulled him into the dark shop, and bolted the door behind him. There had been a torchlight procession in his honour, and they had carried him shoulder-high—"Our Johnnie," as they called him now.

Elsie took his hand and squeezed it. "You are *splendid*," she said. "And I want you to forgive me for ever doubting you."

"It is not done yet," he said, gravely if not sadly, much as Cromwell or Abraham Lincoln or any other great leader of the people might have spoken during the hours of crisis.

AFTER this the money poured in upon him, so that he could do a lot with circulars, handbills, and posters. He very cleverly drew in Societies for the Preservation of Natural Beauties, and fresh noise arose to save a beauty spot as valuable as Whitby, Robin Hood's Bay, or Clovelly. He got aid from Royal Academicians, he shouted to the whole world, and half the world responded. He went to London and visited the Board of Trade, talked to secretaries of Cabinet Ministers, and left stacks of his "literature" on editors' tables. Parliament was not sitting, but he soon had twenty M.P.'s actively engaged on his side.

In fact, he was almost frightened by his success, saying to himself alone in his bedroom at the wooden house, "I must not lose my head. I must keep calm." Because of his youth, he was attacked by waves of emotion that seemed as if they would submerge him and drown him. Sometimes his eyes unexpectedly filled with tears; sometimes he wanted to run away and hide. But that was impossible. He had made himself a leader, and he must lead.

Mothers in doorways sent their toddling children to curtsy before him and bless the good kind gentleman; cheering crowds followed him; he was the grand, immensely prominent figure of the place, known by sight to almost every living soul in it.

And always the thing grew larger, and always, mysteriously and marvellously, he seemed to be able to call upon himself for the needed effort. He trembled superstitiously in recognizing these unexplored depths inside him from which rose the new forces to meet the new demands. Though he felt the emotional strain, his energy was inexhaustible. By the middle of October he had discontinued processions as no longer necessary. He had organized the defence on solid lines. His contention was, not that there should be no docks, but that the docks should be placed to the north instead of to the south. Then nobody would be disturbed. And he sought to prove that, from the engineering point of view, the northern position was better than the other. He clamoured for a Royal Commission—or any sort of impartial trustworthy body—to sit here and take evidence.

THEN towards the end of October his mother, putting her crochet on one side, came and tearfully implored him to return to the family house. For his father's sake he must at least consent to sleep at home. His absence, now that he was so famous, occasioned too much gossip and slander. His father was almost heart-broken about it all.

As a still dutiful son Johnnie consented, and on the evening of his return there was a remarkable scene in the family circle.

Humbly, piteously, they all begged him to retire from "the movement"; and what was so remarkable was their altered attitude. They all saw and were dominated by the amazing change in him; his shyness had vanished; he was grave and dignified, quite polite, but quite inflexible.

"For *our* sake, Johnnie," said the mother.

"Oh, Johnnie, I *wish* you would," said the sister, stationary and deferential in her swing-chair.

"*Can't* you?" said the brothers, pleadingly.

Then Mr. Barton made a final appeal. He said that his business was threatened, the welfare of the firm was at stake; they might be utterly ruined if Johnnie went on, because the great Sir William Pollard—"and perhaps you don't know this, Johnnie"—the great Sir William was now behind the dock scheme.

Johnnie did not know it; but he knew all about the great Sir William. Who did not? Sir William was the financial king of the North; a self-made man who had been creating and collecting wealth for forty triumphant years—a contractor, builder of bridges in many lands, builder of whole railways; owner of mines, collieries, smelting-furnaces, what not, owner of half the county with the domain of Coultas Court in the middle of it. As Mr. Barton declared, he was a man who simply did not brook opposition to his plans or desires; and he would smash, he would pulverize the entire

Barton family as a punishment for Johnnie's impudence.

"Oh, surely he wouldn't be so mean as that?"

"He will, he will!" cried Mr. Barton, distressfully. 'So now will you do what we ask?"

Johnnie said he was very sorry, but he couldn't.

Almost immediately after this he received a letter from the great Sir William himself. Sir William wrote asking if Mr. John Barton could spare time to go over to Coultas Court for a talk on the morning of next day.

A CARRIAGE had been sent to the moor-side railway station, and as Johnnie was being driven across the moor he thought, with a tinge of the old vainglory, how wonderful life is. Here was he, expected, sent for, by the great Sir William, as though for a meeting and discussion between two equal potentates.

But he quickly banished such ideas and considered very seriously what lay before him, thinking, "I am going to encounter our enemy—our deadly enemy—and I must somehow or other rise to the occasion. One thing is certain. This man feels nearly if not quite beaten, or he would not have summoned me. He is frightened at heart, though he may not show it. He means to get round me; he wants to persuade me to give up the fruits of victory. He will perhaps use very subtle arts—I must be prepared for everything. He will bully, perhaps. He will threaten me through my father. At all costs I must keep calm. And I think I will let him talk, and say very little myself."

They drove through woodlands, through parklands, over a stone bridge—and they were there. It was the first time that he had ever entered a private dwelling-house of this size and magnificence. He had expected to be ushered into some sort of small office or library, where Sir William would be sitting at a wide table or desk; but the room in which the servant left him was vacant, lofty, beautiful, with charming old French furniture and a few large pictures. Through high and narrow windows one could see the terraces of a formal garden, and beyond it the gold and crimson woods aglow under the autumn sunlight.

"Good day, Mr. Barton. I'm exceedingly obliged to ye for putting yourself to this trouble."

Johnnie felt a certain confusion of spirit when Sir William came in. Physically as well as financially, he was such a big man. Johnnie noticed the rough material of his grey clothes, his bushy eyebrows, his square, well-shaved jaw. He observed also in the first minute of conversation that Sir William said "ye" instead of "you," and once or twice sounded a vowel in the broad north-country manner. Otherwise there was nothing to suggest that he had made himself, and not been made by many generations of cultured ancestors.

"Yes, I wanted to get a clearer notion of your views, Mr. Barton." While he said this he picked up an antique silver box and offered Johnnie a cigarette. "You won't smoke? Then no more will I. Sit ye down." And they sat—on two very beautiful old chairs. "There's nothing like getting face to face." And Sir William smiled.

THAT smile surprised Johnnie. It was grim and yet somehow genial. If the man had not been one's enemy one would have felt it was a pleasant smile. But, as well as the smile, several things were going to surprise Johnnie before the interview was over.

"Now, Mr. Barton, I note in your public utterances you pronounce emphatically for the north side. I wish you'd tell me on what you base your opinion."

And, in reply to many questions, Johnnie told him firmly yet modestly.

"I see. And ye've put it forward as better for the engineers. Pardon my frankness. But do you know anything at all about engineering?"

"No," said Johnnie, flushing faintly; "but I have procured expert advice. I have had all kinds of help."

"Yes, yes, you've got up your case." And Sir William gave Johnnie his second surprise. "I'm not saying you haven't got up your case very well—very well indeed."

Then Sir William rang the bell, and some maps having been brought by a secretary, they stood at a table examining them. And Sir William expounded some basic principles of the engineer's art.

They sat down again, and Sir William asked more questions. And all the time Johnnie was becoming more and more conscious of the man's power. Power—just that, power. It seemed to be behind him with the weight of those long years, all round him in the beauty of this quiet room, and, more than anywhere else, in him himself. Johnnie felt that he was being judged, being seen through, being turned inside out; and he thought that the man had been doing it all his life, considering other men, using them, and throwing them away when he had done with them, saying two or three times a day, "This fellow might be of service to me. This fellow is no good." As to not talking oneself or making

him talk—that was absurd. It was *he* who decided. Also it was idle to think of keeping things back from him. He divined everything; he *knew* everything.

"About this old piano-dealer, Mr. Barton." And Johnnie started at finding he knew about the music shop too. "This Godwin of yours. May I take it that it was he first set you on the rampage?"

"Yes, that is so."

"It was your compassion stirred, as I take it—and ye thought, 'No, this is a damned shame.'"

"Yes, Sir William, that was exactly what I did think."

"Just so. I quite understand. And Naboth's Vineyard? Was that your own notion?"

"Yes."

"Damned good too." And once more surprising Johnnie, Sir William chuckled. Then he made Johnnie relate the whole campaign stage by stage, chuckling more than once while he listened. Johnnie obediently prattling felt now like a very little boy encouraged and patronized by a schoolmaster. He went on, and inexplicably, irresistibly, told Sir William of his own qualms—of his feeling that the thing was too large, and of his vow that he would die or kill himself rather than fail. He tried not to say this, but emotion carried him on.

"I follow ye," said Sir William, very quietly. "Remember, I was once a young man myself."

AND at this moment Johnnie felt that he positively *liked* Sir William. The man was his deadly enemy; but he was human, had personal charm as well as power. If one did not keep on one's guard he would draw one to him invincibly.

"Now a few more frank questions. You had no ulterior motive in all this?"

"No."

"No private axe to grind?"

"No. I thought it unjust—and I think so still."

"As well as inexpedient. Just so. Only your sense of justice to Godwin; and your sense of propriety—and engineering? Nothing else, Mr. Barton?"

Again Johnnie said what he might have kept to himself. Some expansive candour of his own, together with the man's apparent candour at the moment, forced him to speak. He made confession of his feelings in regard to Elsie Godwin.

"Motives aren't easy to analyse, Sir William. I don't know whether this has anything to do with it or not, but I'd like to marry her if I could. I've never said a word to her. I don't know if she knows."

"Oh, I expect she knows," said Sir William, smiling grimly.

Johnnie was still going on, but Sir William held up his hand—a signal that the visitor had learnt to understand and obey.

"Well, then, Mr. Barton, I think you've managed your campaign uncommonly well. You've shown spirit and grit. You've shown qualities."

Johnnie bowed and flushed.

"But I put it to you. If you've fought and lost, it's done. What is going to be is going to be"; and he made a gesture indicative of finality.

"I shall go on fighting. I don't admit it's over."

Sir John held up his hand; and Johnnie became conscious now of a change in the man's manner. It was watchful, intense. Johnnie thought, "I must pull myself together. All up to now has been child's play. The real thing is coming now."

"Suppose I put it to you, Mr. Barton, that we frankly wish ye quiet, so that we may go on with our work in peace. Suppose—and mark ye, I only say *suppose*—it would be worth while to stop your mouth, even at a bit of expense."

Johnnie had begun to tremble. With an effort he controlled his voice.

"Do I understand that you propose buying me off?"

"Well, let's suppose so—at a price."

Johnnie got up from his chair, very red in the face.

"Sir William, I wonder that you have permitted yourself to speak to me like this."

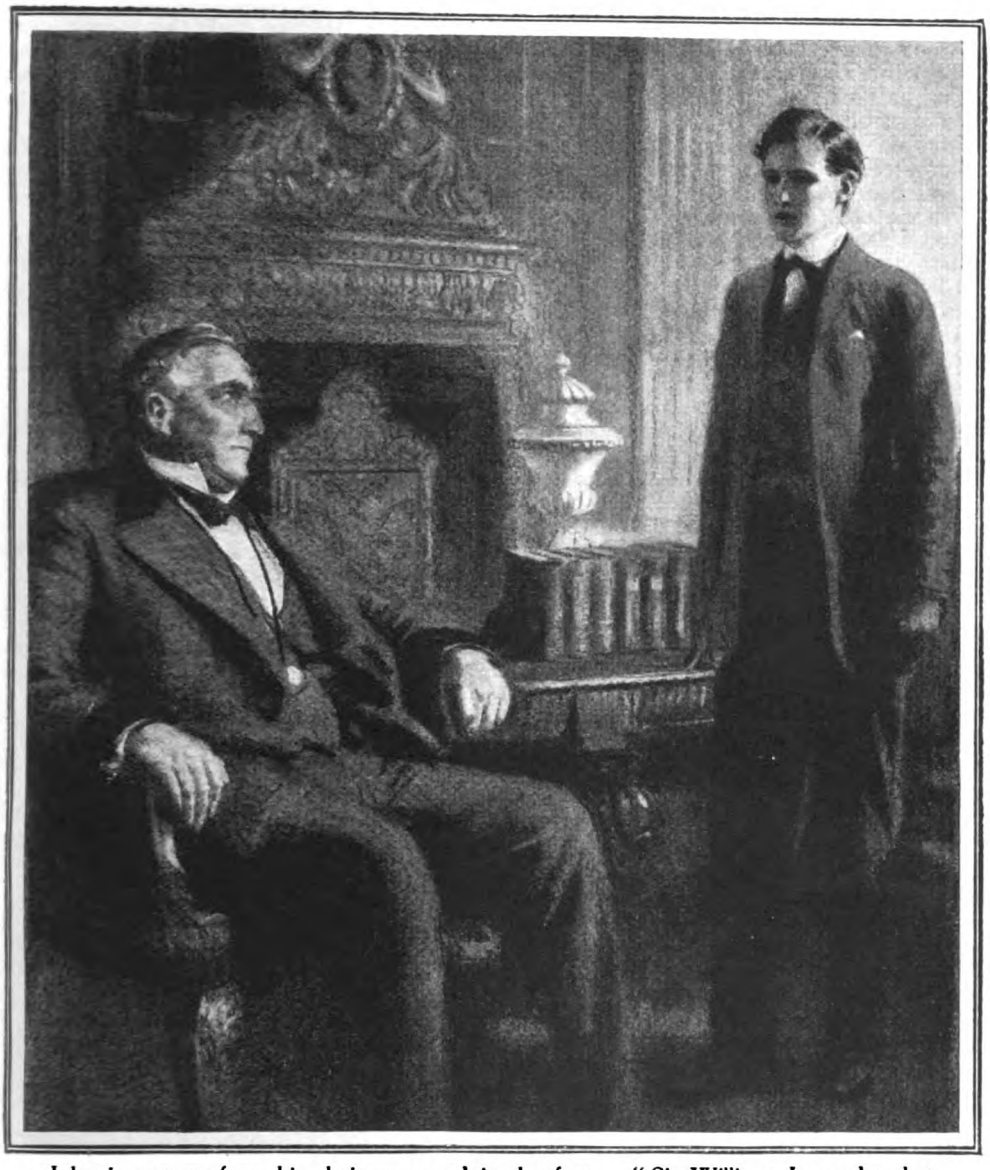
"My dear fellow, I speak to you as a man of the world—nothing else." And he shrugged his big shoulders and looked at Johnnie even more intently. "Sit down, and hear me out. Very well, stand. But listen. Don't fly off wi' the notion you'd be asked to play any dirty trick. No, but only a little compromise. An' ye may take it from me, many a successful man's career has begun by accepting a small compromise between his own highfalutin' ideas and the practical ideas of others."

"Is that how you began yourself?"

Sir William frowned. "Never mind me. I'm *there*—an' I suppose you want to get there. I venture to think that a la'ad of spirit like yourself might go far with a bit of capital to start him. . . . No, be pleased to hear me out. Look here. If one was to say ten thousand pounds, and absolute secrecy in the transaction?"

Johnnie was moving towards the door, and Sir John shouted to him loudly and authoritatively.

"Come back—unless ye're afraid of listening to argument."



Johnnie got up from his chair, very red in the face. "Sir William, I wonder that you have permitted yourself to speak to me like this."

"I am not afraid. But your sort of arguments are useless."

"Compensation, too, for those Godwin people. Yes, something solid for them, so as they'll gain rather than lose by being shifted."

"The Godwins aren't alone. The others. What about the others?"

"Oh, the others must take care of themselves"; and Sir William again shrugged his shoulders. "Now just be good enough to consider it. Your friends to be made comfortable—yourself to be set upon your legs for life—and, of course, you get the girl into the bargain. You'll be able to maintain a wife—which you aren't as it is. And last of all, me for your friend, to give you a push behind when ye seem dilatory on the roadway of ambition!"

He went on talking, he went on tempting; and finally he told Johnnie to take three minutes for quiet meditation before giving his answer.

"Three minutes. If you refuse to turn

it over for three minutes I shall know you're afraid. Three minutes—to weigh the two things in the balance, eh? In one scale dab your natural scruples and hesitations and the rest of it, and in the other put ten thousand golden reasons, a bonnie wife, a guaranteed future"; and Sir William drew a watch from his waistcoat.

In his turn Johnnie shrugged his shoulders. Then he went to one of the windows, and stood looking out with his back to Sir William. The emotional strain was almost too much for him, and those childish tears came to his eyes. He thought that this man was old and infernally clever, versed in the ways of an ugly world; and he himself was very young and ignorant. Not for one moment did he contemplate the possibility of yielding to the temptation, but he measured the weight of the temptation. As he looked out at the stone terraces, the autumn flowers, and the golden woods, he thought, "Perhaps it is true that with such a start I might do all that he says, and one day be able to give Elsie a beautiful place like this to live in. Perhaps it is true, too, that many successful men founded their fortunes on some shameful betrayal." And with this thought a disgust akin to nausea rose in him, because it seemed suddenly as if the whole world was full of injustice, cruelty, wickedness, and as if a giant's strength was needed to go on fighting it.

"Time," said Sir William. "Well, what's your answer?"

"My answer is No," said Johnnie, turning from the window.

"No? Are you quite sure?"

"I am quite sure."

THEN Johnnie had the biggest of his surprises. Sir William, with a changed face, a face all lit up by good humour and satisfaction, came and clapped him on the shoulder.

"Bravo! Now to relieve your mind at once. We're not going to put our docks south; we're going to put 'em north. That first scheme was moonshine—as I saw directly I came into it and examined things. So all your friends on Jacob's Ladder are safe, and may stay there till the day of judgment for what I care."

"Oh, Sir William!"

"That's that. But about yourself." While he spoke he was walking about the room and jingling some money or keys in his trousers pockets. Now he paused impressively. "I'm always on the look-out for young men with certain qualities, which I thought you possessed. But they're no use to me except combined with honesty—the power to refuse a bribe. And, by God, I think you've got that too. I'd like you to come into my business straightaway."

Johnnie, in his joy and the great revulsion of feeling, started an emotional outburst; but Sir William held up his hand.

"Nay—don't ye run away with any nonsense. Don't you fancy I mean to adopt you as a son, like a fairy tale—give you half o' my kingdom now and t'other half when I turn up my toes. I'm offering you a chance—and it's a thundering big one if ye've the grit to take it and follow it where it may lead ye."

Johnnie took the chance and followed it where it led him.

ACROSTICS.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 116.

A TALE of wandering by sea and land
Displays the genius of a master-hand.

1. From England certainly they are not far,
But Egypt shows us clearly where they are.
2. Take cleric, half of whom should not appear.
Take part of place, and find it present here.
3. Two Roman figures mix with lady fair:
Nine-lettered word—last five say what and where.
4. First catch the beast, the central third select,
Half of a mount and half a state reject.
5. Teaching in this the nine-year-old should seek,
But keep her clear of Algebra and Greek.
6. The aim of many, and of some the lot,
From east, from west, from south it cometh not.
7. With poisoned knife she cut the bird in two,
The bird supposed to feed on air and dew.
8. One name of her—whose bridegroom, and his wife,
Welcomed a guest, then robbed him of his life.
9. Choose one of twelve, one word that four will make.
First and last words refuse, the others take.

PAX.

Answers to Acrostic No. 116 should be addressed to the Acrostic Editor, THE STRAND MAGAZINE, *Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C.2, and must arrive not later than by the first post on March 10th.*

Two answers may be sent to every light.

It is essential that solvers, with their answers to this acrostic, should send also their real names and addresses.

ANSWER TO TRIPLE ACROSTIC No. 115.

1.	T	ec	H	is	M	
2.	H	a	O	t	I	
3.	E	xte	N	sio	N	
4.	R	o	P	h	I	
5.	I	mpo	R	ter	S	
6.	G	r	I	s	T	
7.	H	alla	M	shir	E	
8.	T	rav	E	lle	R	

NOTES.—Light 1, Catechism: half of "cant" removed. 2. Chaotic. 4. Trophic. 5. Import, bearing. 7. Hallam, the historian.

"Imitate" and "Importune" are accepted for the seventh light of No. 113.

THE MAN WITH THE BROKEN NOSE

by

MICHAEL ARLEN

ILLUSTRATED BY
W. SMITHSON BROADHEAD

I.

"EVER been to the National Gallery?" asked George Tarlyon.

It was an offensive question to ask a grown man; but I answered it.

"Ah!" said Tarlyon.

"I can't help thinking," said Tarlyon, "that you did Madame Tussaud's the same afternoon."

"If you want to know," I muttered, darkly, "it was the Tower, St. Paul's, and the National Gallery that I did on the same afternoon. My mother took me."

"Of course I can't compete with your mother," said Tarlyon, "but I will take you —now."

We were sitting over luncheon at the Café Royal. I am very partial to luncheoning, which is the correct term for sitting over luncheon. It was a day in July. I sighed.

"Come on," he said, firmly. "One must not neglect art."

We walked from the Café Royal to Trafalgar Square, which is an untidy walk on a glaring afternoon in July. And then we walked about the Gallery; we looked at paintings with that rapt look which can see All Round and Into a thing; and we stood before "Musidora Bathing Her Feet," by Thomas Gainsborough.

"What a masterpiece," Tarlyon sighed, "if only she hadn't got three legs!" I could not at first see Musidora's third leg, but after he had pointed it out to me I could see nothing else but that ghostly third leg dangling over her knee between the other two.

"You see," he explained, "Gainsborough painted one leg badly, and so he painted it out and fitted another—but he wasn't as efficient at painting out as at painting in, and so Musidora's third leg came back. There is something displeasing about a woman with an exaggerated number of legs, though some people rather like that kind of thing, saying that a woman can't have too many."

It was as we turned away, talking loftily about legs, that we were confronted by a tall and dark young man.

"Sir," he addressed Tarlyon, "I would be obliged if you would tell me in which gallery hang the pictures by Manet?"

One wondered why he didn't ask one of the many uniformed men who are strewn about the Gallery for the purpose of being asked that kind of thing.

"Ah," said Tarlyon, playfully, 'one

letter can make so much difference! You are sure you do not mean Monet?"

"Manet," said the dark stranger, and looked as though he meant it.

"I am delighted to meet a man of taste," said Tarlyon, heartily. "We, too, were just about to view the Manets. We are partial to Manet. This way."

We followed him like lambs. Tarlyon's knowledge as to where the Manets were took the form of trying every gallery in which the Manets were not. We repassed Gainsborough's three-legged lady, Tarlyon commenting. The dark stranger walked silently and firmly. He was a tall young man of slight but powerful build; his nose, which was of the patrician sort, would have been shapely had it not once been broken in such a way that for ever after it must noticeably incline to one side; and though his appearance was that of a gentleman, he carried himself with an air of determination and assurance which would, I thought, make any conversation with him rather a business. There was any amount of back-chat in his dark eyes. His hat, which was soft and had the elegance of the well-worn, he wore cavalierly. Shoes by Lobb.

At last a picture rose before our eyes, a large picture, very blue. Now who shall describe that picture which was so blue, blue even to the grass under the soldiers' feet, the complexion of the soldiers' faces, and the rifles in the soldiers' hands? Over against a blue tree stood a solitary soldier, and miserably blue was his face, while the others stood very stiffly with their backs to us, holding their rifles in a position which gave one no room to doubt that they were about to shoot the solitary soldier for some misdemeanour.

"Manet," said Tarlyon, proudly.

"You see, sir," he said, "I know all about killing. I have killed many men——"

The dark young stranger was absorbed; he pulled his hat a little lower over his left eye, so that the light should not obtrude on his vision.

"These things happen," he murmured. "And they happen like that." But it was as though he spoke to himself.

"Come on," I whispered to Tarlyon, for we seemed to be intruding—so that I was quite startled when the stranger suddenly turned from the picture to me.

"You see, sir," he said, gravely, "I know all about killing. I have killed many men——"

"Army Service Corps?" inquired Tarlyon.

"No, sir," snapped the stranger. "I know nothing of your Corps. I am a Zeytounli."

"Are you, by God?" cried Tarlyon. I envied him, but could not imitate him.

"Please have patience with me," I begged the stranger. "What is a Zeytounli?"

He regarded me with those smouldering dark eyes; and I realized vividly that his nose had been broken in some argument which had cost the other man more than a broken nose.

"Zeytoun," he said, softly, "is a fortress in Armenia. For five hundred years Zeytoun has not laid down her arms, but now she is burnt stones on the ground. The Zeytounlis, sir, are the hill-men of Armenia. I am an Armenian."

"Oh, I'm so sorry," Tarlyon murmured.

"Why?" snarled the Armenian.

"Well, you've been treated pretty badly, haven't you?" said Tarlyon. "All these massacres and things——"

The stranger glared at him, and then he laughed at him. I shall remember that laugh. So will Tarlyon. Then the stranger raised a finger and, very gently, he tapped Tarlyon's shoulder.

"Listen," said he. "Your manner of speaking bores me. Turks have slain many Armenians. Wherefore Armenians have slain many Turks. You may take it from me that, by sticking to it year in and year out for five hundred years, Armenians have in a tactful way slain more Turks than Turks have slain Armenians. That is why I am proud of being Armenian. And you would oblige me, gentlemen, by informing your countrymen that we have no use for their discarded trousers, but would be grateful for some guns. And you would still further oblige me by trying, in future, not to talk nonsense about Armenians. *Adieu*, gentlemen. You will probably hear of me again."

He left us.

"I didn't know," I murmured, "that Armenians were like that. I have been misled about Armenians. And he speaks English very well."

"Hum," said Tarlyon, thoughtfully. "But no one would say he was Armenian if he wasn't, would he?"

"Also," said I, "he is the most aggressive young man I have ever met. Manet indeed!"

"So would you be aggressive," Tarlyon snorted, "if you had been massacred and made an atrocity of ever since you were a slip of a boy, and had spent your holidays being chased round Lake Van by roaring Turks and hairy Kurds with scimitars dripping with the blood of Circassian children."

'Oh, not Circassian!" I pleaded.

"Well, make it Chaldean. Boys will be boys the world over."

"All the same," I suggested, "it must be pretty restless for the Turks living in the same suburb with a crowd of young men like that. I would go a long way round on a dark night to avoid meeting that young man, just in case he might be in a bad temper."

"They go for your ankles with their teeth, those chaps," said Tarlyon, dreamily. "I remember once in Mozambique——" But that is not worth repeating.

II.

IF anyone, even one renowned for a passion for truth, like the late Lord Bryce, told me the strange tale of our second meeting with the Zeytounli that very night, and of the strange consequences of that meeting, I might humour him, but I would not believe him. But this is a true tale; it happened to Tarlyon and me; and Tarlyon says that there can be no offence to the parties concerned in telling it, simply because no one will believe it. People are very sceptical, Tarlyon says.

This is what actually happened, towards midnight of that very day, within a stone's throw of Claridge's Hotel, in Brook Street, Mayfair.

George Tarlyon and I had been of the same company for dinner, and then bridge at a house in Brook Street. Towards midnight a gap in the bridge allowed us to slip away, which we did, refusing a last glass of barley-water with passionate restraint. Tarlyon had parked his car outside Claridge's, and thither we walked. Brook Street at that hour is undecided between a state of coma and one of glittering abandon, which means that the deathly silence is every now and then shattered by rich cars hurling themselves and lovely ladies all covered in pearls and chrysoprase into the bosom of Grosvenor Square. Claridge's, of course, hath music, so that youth may dance. But of pedestrians along Brook Street there are less than a few—and of young men in gents' evening wear running furiously after limousines there is a noticeable scarcity. He simply tore past us, that young man, in the middle of the road, a few yards behind a swiftly-going car. The car stopped towards Grosvenor Square, and somehow the young man seemed to disappear. We were more than fifty yards away, and could not determine whether it was a man or a woman who emerged from the car and entered the house, but it looked like a fat little man. Then the car slid away. The pursuing young man had disappeared.

"He can't have been doing it for fun," said Tarlyon.

"Perhaps he's gone to have a bath," I suggested. For it was a very warm night, and running after motor-cars must have been a wet business.

"We'll see," said Tarlyon. We retraced our steps up Brook Street, and passed the house into which the occupant of the car had disappeared. It was a house like another, dark and silent; and as it stood almost at the corner, we went round the corner into Grosvenor Square; at least, we were rounding

"We noticed it," said Tarlyon. "In fact, we noticed nothing else."

"Damn!" snapped the Armenian. "So you saw me running!"

"So did he," I murmured, looking up Brook Street. A policeman was sauntering towards us.

"If you don't want to be asked any questions by the arm of the law," Tarlyon suggested, "you had better take a turn round the square with us."

He simply tore past us, that young man, in the middle

the corner when a young man in a great hurry collided into us.

"Ah!" said Tarlyon.

"Sorry," said the stranger. I was right about the running—it had made his face very wet.

"So it's you," said Tarlyon.

"Good evening, gentlemen," said the Armenian, with a sort of furious courtesy. "If you will excuse me, I am in a hurry." He made to pass us.

"I won't move," the stranger cried, passionately. "I have found him at last—I won't move."

"But neither will he," I soothed him. "He's gone into the house."

"Did you see him go in?"

We nodded.

"Ah, but his Excellency is clever!" said the Armenian, viciously.

We grabbed hold of him and hauled him round the square.

"Now," said Tarlyon, "what's all this Excellency nonsense?"

"*He* doesn't think it's nonsense," the young man muttered grimly.

"Look here," I supplied, kindly, "either this is a plot or it is not a plot. In either case you'll look rather an idiot, so——"

"You'd better confide in us," Tarlyon finished. "We, being English, have great sympathy with oppressed peoples."

"Oh, do you?" said I. Sarcastic I was, you understand.

"And one shot is always enough."

I gave up.

"And where," asked Tarlyon, reasonably, "does his Excellency come in?"

"He won't come in anywhere after to-night. His Excellency is going to die." And with that the Armenian suddenly stopped in his unwilling stride, and looked

of the road, a few yards behind a swiftly-going car.

"I have noticed it," said the Armenian, grimly. He was obviously a well-educated young man.

We had him walking between us, and he never even pretended that he liked our company.

"I suppose," said Tarlyon, cattishly, "you've got bombs all over you."

"Sir," said the Armenian, "you are a fool. Do I look the kind of man to carry bombs? I favour the revolver."

from one to the other of us. His broken nose made fantasy of his dark face, but I remember thinking it must once have been a handsome enough face of its kind, for not even a broken nose made him ugly. He was as tall as Tarlyon, but much slighter; his was a dangerous thinness. He addressed Tarlyon.

"Sir," he said—an Armenian habit, I suppose, that "sir"—"you have intruded your company on me, but I have accepted

you. I have trusted you. I have treated you as gentlemen, being by nature an optimist, and I take it for granted that you will neither betray me nor try to deter me. You will understand the strength of my intention when I say that a young girl is concerned in this, that I have sworn a vow, and that if you were in my position you would do what I am going to do. Good night, gentlemen."

"Hold on," cried Tarlyon. "What on earth were you chasing that car for? And who the devil is his Excellency? We'd like to know, you see, so as to be able to pick him out from among the other murders in to-morrow's papers."

"Achmed Jzzit Pasha, the Young Turk," said the Armenian, softly.

"Ah!" said George Tarlyon. "I see. Enver Pasha, Talaat Pasha, and Achmed Jzzit Pasha, of the Committee of Union and Progress. I see. Talaat Pasha has already been killed, hasn't he?"

"Three of us," said the Armenian, sombrely, "set out from Armenia last year, and each of us had a mission of revenge. One of us—you will remember—shot and killed Talaat Pasha in a street in Berlin some months ago. Enver Pasha has fled to Bokhara. A murder has been arranged, and will shortly take place in Bokhara. And I, at last, have found Achmed Jzzit, the foulest murderer of all. There is not an Armenian in the world who would not shoot Achmed Jzzit Pasha on sight if he had the chance—but Armenians who come to Western countries at once acquire the nasty Western habit of money-grubbing and forget the glory there is in killing. But I, a Zeytounli, have never forgotten it."

"Were you," I asked, "educated at an English public school?"

"That is a matter of opinion. But even an English public school could not make me forget that I am an Armenian, and that an Armenian's first business is to kill Turks; failing Turks, he can, of course, kill Kurds or carry off Circassian maidens——"

"Oh, not Circassian!" I pleaded.

"Well, Albanian," he allowed me. "During the war I fought through the siege and destruction of Zeytoun, and then as an irregular under Andranik; and since the war I have pursued Achmed Jzzit Pasha—and to-night I have found him. He has been here in London for some months, but under an assumed name, for he knows that he is marked by more than one revolutionary society, and he is afraid. I will cure him of his fear for ever." And with a wrench his arms were free of our gently restraining hands and he was off down the square. But Tarlyon was swift, very swift; I panted up just as he was again "intruding himself" on the Armenian.

"You don't seem to realize," breathed Tarlyon, "that you can't enter a house in Brook Street, kill a Pasha, and get away——"

"I don't care if I get away or not," the other broke in fiercely. "Besides, my friend who killed Talaat in Berlin was acquitted. So will you please excuse me, sir?"

It was marvellous what venom that broken-nosed young man could put into a simple question!

"I've taken rather a fancy to you," murmured Tarlyon, "and I hate to think of your going off murdering Pashas. Come and have a drink instead, there's a good fellow."

"If I tell you," snapped the Armenian, "that there is a girl in that house, and that I must rescue that girl, then you will perhaps see your way to minding your own business."

"Has the Pasha got your girl?" I asked, kindly.

"She is my sister, you fool," he said, wearily. "And do you think I can allow my little sister to stay in that loathsome old creature's house one night more than I can help?"

"Collar him," said Tarlyon to me; and I grabbed the young man's other arm, though I didn't in the least want to, and we began hauling him round the square again. As I walked close to him I could feel a solid, bulky thing in his hip-pocket, and I did not like the feeling.

"NOW," said Tarlyon, very business-like, "what's all this about your sister?"

The Armenian almost screamed with impatience.

"Have I not told you all along that if you were in my position you would do exactly what I am going to do? Must I explain to you that my little sister was carried away by that old lecher before my eyes? Must I tell you how Zeytoun on the hill was at last shelled to dust by the batteries of two army corps under Achmed Jzzit Pasha, and how the Turks entered the smoking town and gave no quarter to man, woman, or child? Must I, just to satisfy your useless and asinine curiosity, ravage my heart with retelling how my father and mother were bayoneted before my eyes, and how I escaped only because they thought me already dead? Must I tell you how my little sister was carried away to the harem of Achmed Jzzit Pasha, who, on beholding her, straightway swore a mighty oath that he would not rest from disembowelling Christians until he had had his way? Did she give way? The slaying

went on day by day and night by night, so that a count of the leaves of the trees in your Green Park would make but a fraction of the number of the dead bodies that lay rotting in the plain of Mush. An expert killer was Achmed Jzzit Pasha, and whether or not the natural blood-lust of the Osmanli was heightened by his oath I do not know, but I do know that there has not been such a tale of dead Christians since Timur passed through the land to meet Bajazet. And that is the man who holds my sister in that house, while you detain me here with vain questions and idiotic comments. I followed him to Paris, but he escaped me. I found him in Bournemouth, but again I withheld my hand while I planned some way of rescuing Anaïs—fool that I was! But the idea in my head was that I must first get the girl to some place of safety, and then come back, kill him, and pay whatever is the penalty in your country for killing a loathsome animal. But now I have realized that there is no other way of rescuing Anaïs but by killing him first. Always, wherever he goes, he keeps her locked in a room next to his, and thus it must be in this house. Horrible fancies seethe in his brain, and he sleeps lightly. And while the night is dwindling, here I stand satisfying your idle curiosity. You really must excuse me now, gentlemen."

"But hold on!" cried Tarlyon. "Why kill the wretched man at all? Why not rescue your sister with the charming name and let him go on being a Pasha until he dies a horrible death by reason of those fancies which you mentioned? He won't dare come after her, and I don't see much point in getting your sister back if you have got to swing for it more or less at once. Eh, Ralph?"

"Quite right," said I. "Let's drink it over."

"This is no time for drink," snapped the Armenian. "The night is dwindling, and how can I desist from killing him when, as I have told you, I cannot get into her room without awaking him? And it stands to reason that as soon as I see him I shall also see red, and kill, as I must, by reason of my vow and by order of the Dashnakists' Society. As I have told you, I would have preferred to have got Anaïs out of the house first, but that seems impossible."

Tarlyon opened his mouth, and he closed it. I knew what was passing in Tarlyon's mind, and I thought I would let it pass, so that he might think again. But then he re-opened his mouth, and this is what he said:—

"My friend and I," he said, "might perhaps consider giving you a little assistance, if in return you gave us a promise——"

"I promise nothing."

"Don't be silly," said Tarlyon. "What I wish to point out is that, if my friend and I help you to get your sister out of that house, you must drop this killing business. We will contrive some way of keeping his Excellency quiet while you rescue your sister, but you must give your word of honour, or some efficient substitute, that you will not come back and murder the wretched Pasha. Now I want no back-chat about it—either you will or you will not."

"But I am bound to the Dashnakists!" cried the Armenian, rather regretfully, I thought.

"Damn the Dashnakists," said Tarlyon. "Yes or no?"

"I promise," said the Armenian, suddenly.

Reasonable noises issued from me.

"You seem to take it for granted that we just walk into the house. How do we get in?"

"This cuts windows like a knife," said the Armenian, showing us in the palm of his hand a glittering little thing like a toy dagger. "A German invention."

"The matter will be further facilitated," said Tarlyon, "by our first getting my car, which is opposite Claridge's, and driving in it to the front door. No policeman would dare suspect anything wrong in a house while a Rolls-Royce is standing outside it. Especially, Ralph, when you are sitting in it."

"I shall be in the house," I said, firmly. Not that I wanted to be, but one says those things, and one always says them firmly.

"Perhaps that would be better," said the Armenian. "It will certainly take the two of you to keep Achmed Jzzit quiet while I break in the first locked door I see and get Anaïs. And a Rolls-Royce car is even more impressive empty than when someone is in it—people make it seem possible."

THUS and thus, we got the car and drove bravely to the house. We passed two policemen at the corner of Davies Street, but they were not interested in us. I must say burglary is easy when one has a large and rich car to do it from; at the worst, one is only thought to be rolls-roistering.

Like all Mayfair houses this had a tradesman's entrance; through a little gate, on the right of the few steps to the front door, down some steps, and into a little area where was the kitchen door and a window.

"Wait in the car," said the dark young

man, and vanished down to the area. We heard a very faint scratching, one little wicked word, a little more scratching, and then the lights blazed up through the glass above the front door, and it was opened. The Armenian stood in the lighted doorway as though he owned the house. I admired him.

Tarlyon's first words when we were in the hall of the house were: "Give me your revolver."

The Armenian surrendered his weapon without a word; he sighed. Then he marshalled us.

"Very quiet," he whispered. "And very quick. We must try the upstairs rooms to see which is his bedroom. One touch on the door will awake him, so you must muffle him at once, else he will awake the servants. In the meanwhile I will find my sister; then I will take her straight out of the house and we will await you in your car—and I will blow your horn twice, gently, to show that I am awaiting you. It will be kind of you, then, to drive us to Mr. Ritz's hotel in Piccadilly, where, perhaps, with your influence, we may get my sister a lodging for the night. But, remember, keep a tight hold on Achmed Jzzit until I blow the horn—muffle him straightaway and let him not open his mouth, else he will bring the whole neighbourhood down on us. Let us begin."

WE began with a bit of luck—or so it seemed. Having tiptoed up to the first landing, the very first door we touched held the lightly-sleeping Pasha. We knew he was there by the howl that followed our touching the door-knob—he was indeed a light sleeper. But we gave him no time to make a real noise; we leapt into the room; I switched on the light, Tarlyon leapt on the bed and him, I leapt after Tarlyon, and in a second we held him, making smothered howling noises, under the bed-clothes. We had not even had time to see if he was young or old, but the shape of him suggested a certain age. His was, however, an active and restless shape. We were very gentle with him, almost too gentle, for once a distinct howl issued from somewhere under the sheets.

"Steady," said George Tarlyon to the restless shape.

"You'll throttle yourself," said George Tarlyon.

To prevent him doing that we, with a sudden and well-concerted movement, unscrewed his head and muffled him with a handkerchief. We looked upon his face for the first time.

"You're a nasty, cruel old man," said George Tarlyon.

Achmed Jzzit Pasha looked all that the Armenian had said he was, and more. A fierce old face it was that looked murder at us. His eyes, under white bushy eyebrows, were frantic and furious, and never for a second did he cease to struggle. I thought of that fine old Turkish warrior of the last century, the man of Plevna, Osman Pasha; this old man is of the same breed, I thought.

We had so far heard nothing of the Armenian; but that Achmed Jzzit Pasha realized that we two were only accessories was evident, for not even his struggling with us concealed the fact that he was listening—listening intently.

A slight noise, as of a drawer hastily banged, came from the next room. It was only a small noise, but it had a mighty effect on the old slayer of men. His eyes simply tore at us, his fat little body heaved frantically, he bit my finger in trying to howl—he went quite mad, that violent old Turk. But neither Tarlyon nor I are very small men, and we managed to hold him. I admonished him severely.

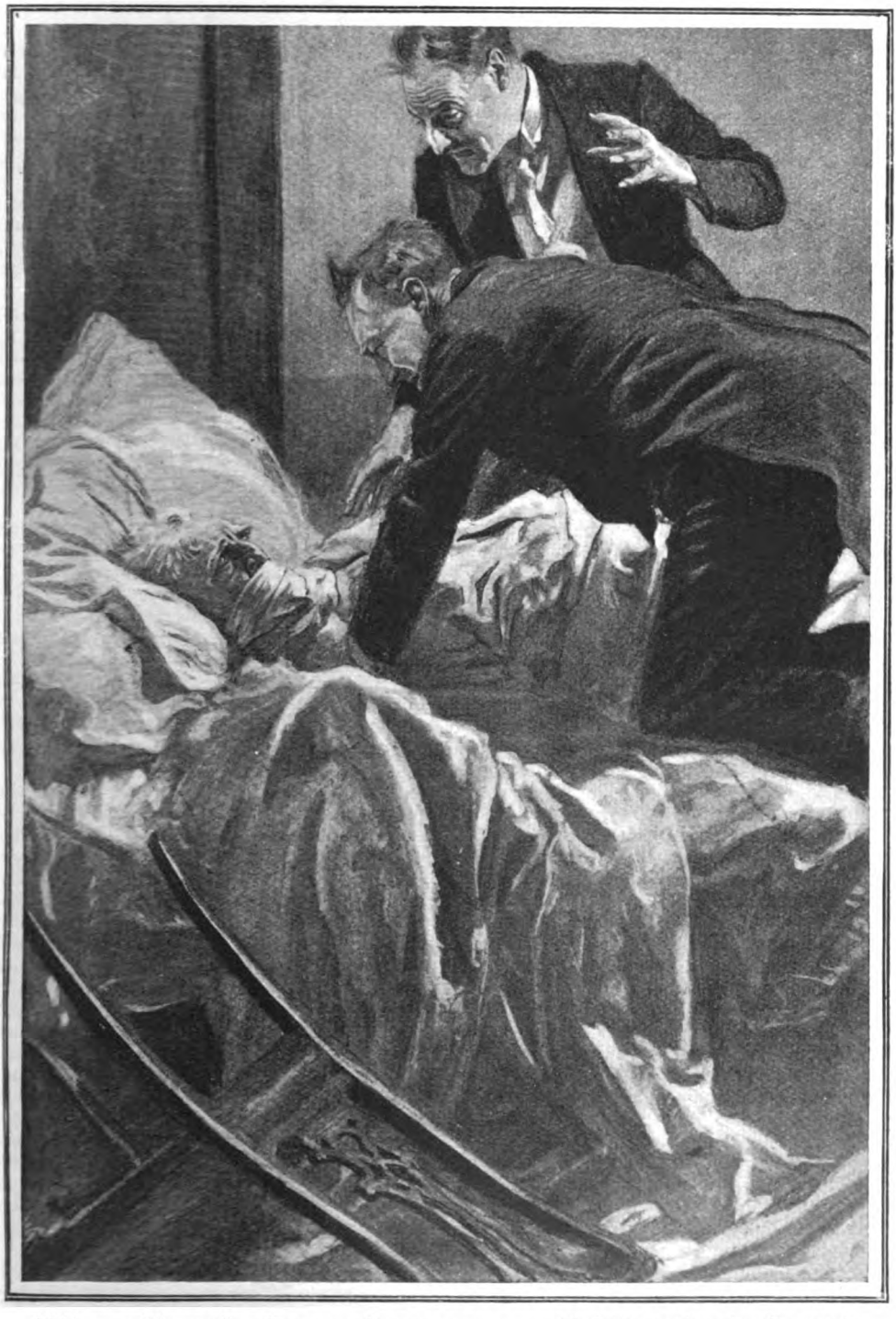
"It's only little Anaïs packing up to go away with her brother," I told him; but that man knew not resignation nor repentance, and still we had gently to battle with him.

"He's an infernally long time about it," grumbled Tarlyon at last—and at that very moment the horn outside blew twice. We welcomed it.

"Now," said Tarlyon to the heaving old man, "we are about to release you. Your girl has flown, so it's too late for you to make a noise. So don't." And for form's sake he showed the revolver, though I never saw a man who looked less likely to use it. "You may not realize it," he added, severely, "but we have saved your life. After the first shock has worn off you will thank two disinterested men for having saved you from the wrath of an Armenian."

With another sudden and well-concerted movement we let go. The Pasha did not make a noise. It was evident he realized that it was too late. But in the next few seconds he revealed, for a Turk, an astonishing knowledge of the baser words and idioms of the English language. Then he leapt out of bed, a funny little creature in pink flannel pyjamas, and rushed out of the room. Breathless, we found him in the next room.

Now, I have very little acquaintance with girls' bedrooms, but a glance was sufficient to show me that no girl alive could have a bedroom like that. There was no bed in it, and very little else; just a thing like a tallboy but made of steel, or so it looked: and that had certainly been ravaged. Then the old man really began



With a sudden and well-concerted movement, we muffled him with a handkerchief.

to howl, and we hadn't the heart to stop him. He howled himself back to the bedroom, and we followed him, looking and feeling like all the things he said we were.

"But aren't you Achmed Jzzit Pasha?" I pleaded. But the life had suddenly gone out of him; he sat on the edge of the bed.

"My name is Wagstaffe," he said, weakly, "and I have the finest collection of Roman coins in the country. Or rather I had. My son, Michael Wagstaffe, has them now—thanks to you two idiots!"

We had heard of Michael Wagstaffe—bankrupt twice, a notorious war co-respondent, and a V.C. What can you do with a man like that?

Tarlyon had an idea, which took him to the window; I had the same idea, and followed him. We looked down upon the face of Brook Street, and behold! it was empty. Never was a Rolls-Royce car with lamps alight so invisible. We went back to Mr. Wagstaffe on the edge of the bed.

"We are sorry," I muttered, but he seemed not to hear us. George Tarlyon is usually a fine, upstanding fellow, and some people have thought him handsome, but now he looked as though he had been trodden on all over.

Mr. Wagstaffe was whispering, almost to himself: "Two years ago, when I drove him out of the house, he swore that one day he would steal my coins. And now he has stolen my coins. I always knew he would keep his word, for he is a devil. And he always knew that, come what might, I would not prosecute my son for a thief. My Roman coins!" And Mr. Wagstaffe wept.

WE explained our position to him. We gave him a brief outline of the facts. We begged him to understand. We pointed out that if his son really had been an Armenian and if he had really been Achmed Jzzit Pasha we had undoubtedly saved his life. I couldn't help thinking that he ought to be grateful to us, but I didn't say that.

He seemed to find a little solace in our discomfiture.

"Ah, he's a clever boy, Michael," sighed Mr. Wagstaffe. "He is always on the look-out for what he calls the Mugs. I gather that you two gentlemen are Mugs—the same, perhaps, as what are known in America as Guys. But I, his father, can assure you that he is not an Armenian; nor has he ever been nearer to Armenia than the Bankruptcy Court, but he has been there twice. He calls himself the cavalier of the streets, but when he is up to any of his tricks he disguises himself as an Armenian—the disguise consisting merely of his saying he is an Armenian. It's so simple, he says, for the Mugs believe him at once, on the ground that no one would say he was an Armenian if he wasn't. I have only been back from America a week, and he must have been searching all London for me. He probably saw me at the theatre this evening, and was going to raid my house alone when you two intelligent gentlemen got in his way. But he is not a bad boy really—he's got ideas, that's what it is, and also Mugs have an irresistible fascination for him. Take your case, for instance. I have no doubt that he will be ready to return me my coins in exchange for a cheque—though, of course, that depends on the cheque. And I can see, gentlemen, that you are eager to show your regret for breaking into my house and assaulting my person by offering to pay the cheque yourselves. I thank you; though, indeed, it is the least you can do, and an infinitely more convenient way of settling the matter than wearisome arguments in a police-court—provided, of course, that housebreaking and assault are matters for argument. I have never yet heard they were."

I giggled. I simply couldn't help it.

"That's all very well," said Tarlyon, "but what about my car?"

"What is the matter with your car?" asked Mr. Wagstaffe, gently.

"There's so little the matter with it," snapped Tarlyon, "that it's probably half-way down the Dover road by now."

"Ah," said Mr. Wagstaffe, wearily. "I see. Cars have an irresistible fascination for Michael. I am sorry. Was it a good car?"

Tarlyon's answer left no possible room for doubt on that head.

"Pity," said Mr. Wagstaffe. "A great pity. He may, of course, return it. He may. You cannot, of course, compel him to, for it would be difficult for you, in your position, to put the police on him. But he may return it on his own. Michael is not a bad boy really. He will, I am sure, communicate with me as to what I will offer for the return of my coins. I will then give him the cheque which you have so kindly promised to post to me to-night, and perhaps he will soften also as regards your car and return it to you. Naturally, he will expect your cheque to approximate to the value of your car—say, half its value. Michael is something of an expert about the value of cars. That's why I said it was a pity, sir, a pity that your car was not a cheap car. But I am sure you will have no difficulty in finding a taxi-cab home. They are so abundant in Grosvenor Square that my sleep is often disturbed by them."

The rest of the story is not at all interesting. George Tarlyon's car was finally returned, and George Tarlyon is sorry that Mr. Michael Wagstaffe's nose is already broken.

"The One and Only"—

SOME UNIQUE MUSIC-HALL FEATS

Described by

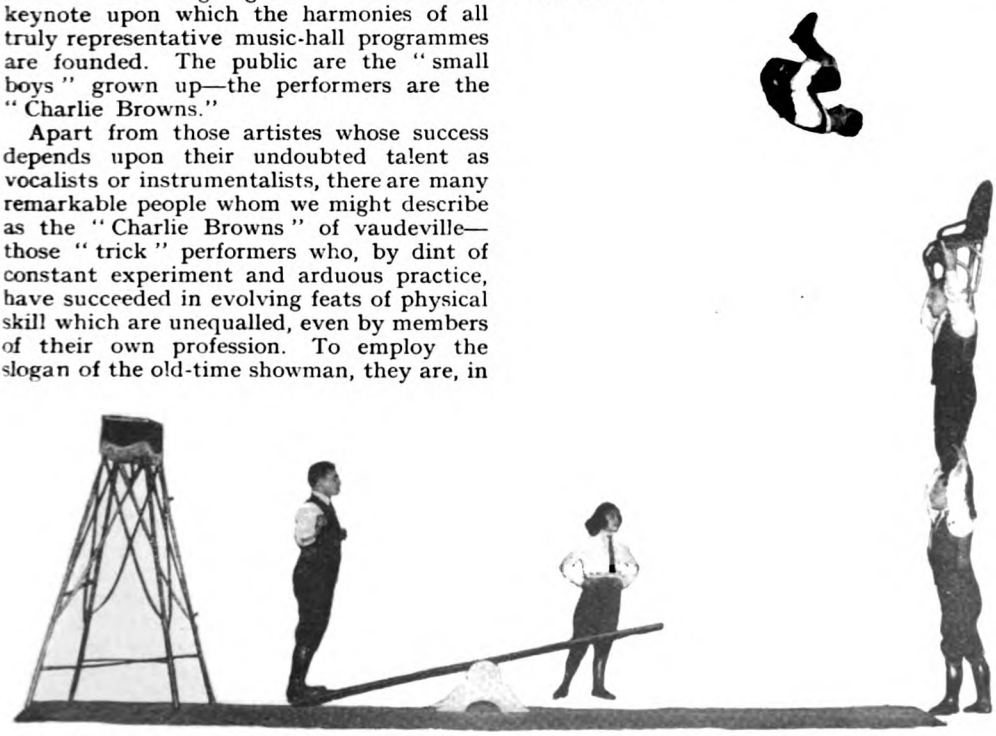
Fenn Sherie

THERE is a story told of a small boy who, after being praised for his success in the school examinations, exclaimed: "But I wish I were as clever as Charlie Brown—you ought to see the way he can waggle his ears."

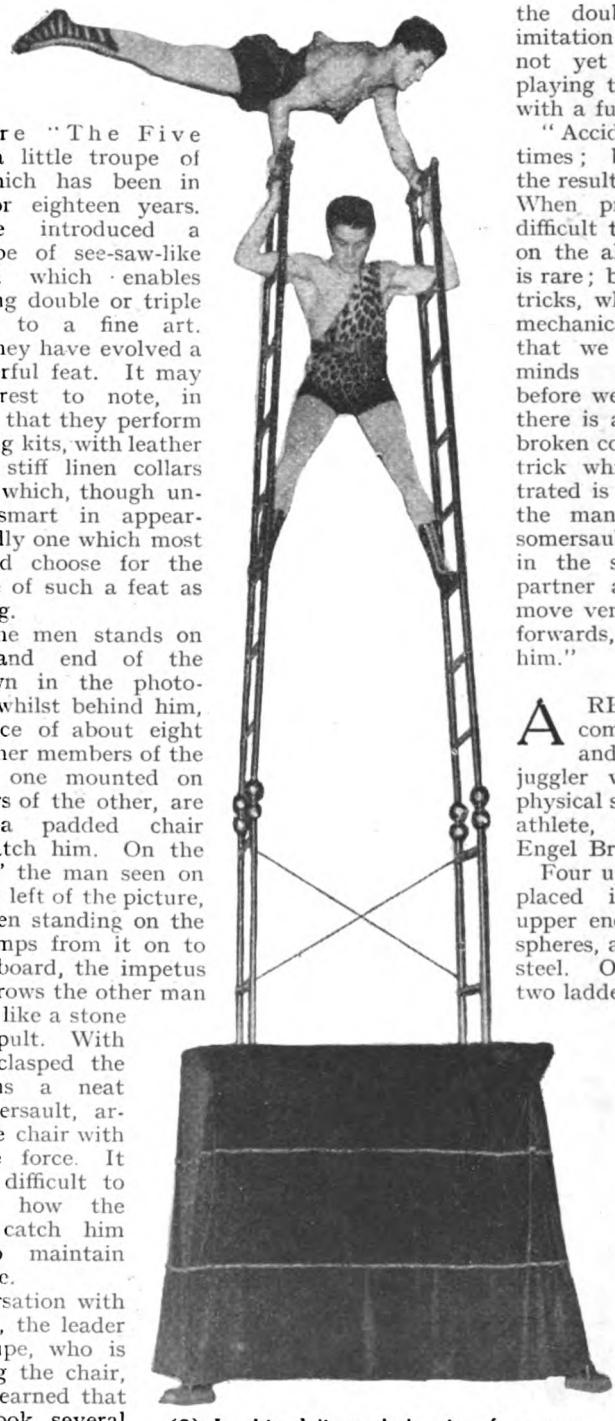
Thus do we all admire those who can achieve something beyond our own capabilities. The poet who wrote "Men are but children of a larger growth" touched the keynote upon which the harmonies of all truly representative music-hall programmes are founded. The public are the "small boys" grown up—the performers are the "Charlie Browns."

Apart from those artistes whose success depends upon their undoubted talent as vocalists or instrumentalists, there are many remarkable people whom we might describe as the "Charlie Browns" of vaudeville—those "trick" performers who, by dint of constant experiment and arduous practice, have succeeded in evolving feats of physical skill which are unequalled, even by members of their own profession. To employ the slogan of the old-time showman, they are, in fact, "the one and only" performers of the tricks herein described—sometimes imitated, but never excelled.

It is usually the concluding feat which forms the *pièce de résistance* in a demonstration of physical powers. In taking a few representative examples of "star" tricks, it is our privilege to study them at close quarters—to view them, as it were, from the "wings" instead of the auditorium.



(1) A daring somersault from spring-board to chair—rendered the more difficult by the fact that the man depicted in mid-air never falls twice in the same direction.



First are "The Five Wartons," a little troupe of acrobats which has been in existence for eighteen years. They have introduced a peculiar type of see-saw-like spring-board which enables them to bring double or triple somersaults to a fine art. From this they have evolved a truly wonderful feat. It may be of interest to note, in parentheses, that they perform in neat riding kits, with leather gaiters and stiff linen collars —an outfit which, though undoubtedly smart in appearance, is hardly one which most of us would choose for the performance of such a feat as the following.

One of the men stands on the right-hand end of the board shown in the photograph (1), whilst behind him, at a distance of about eight feet, two other members of the troupe, the one mounted on the shoulders of the other, are balancing a padded chair ready to catch him. On the word "Go" the man seen on the extreme left of the picture, who has been standing on the pedestal, jumps from it on to the spring-board, the impetus of which throws the other man into the air like a stone from a catapult. With his knees clasped the latter turns a neat double somersault, arriving in the chair with considerable force. It is, in fact, difficult to understand how the men who catch him manage to maintain their balance.

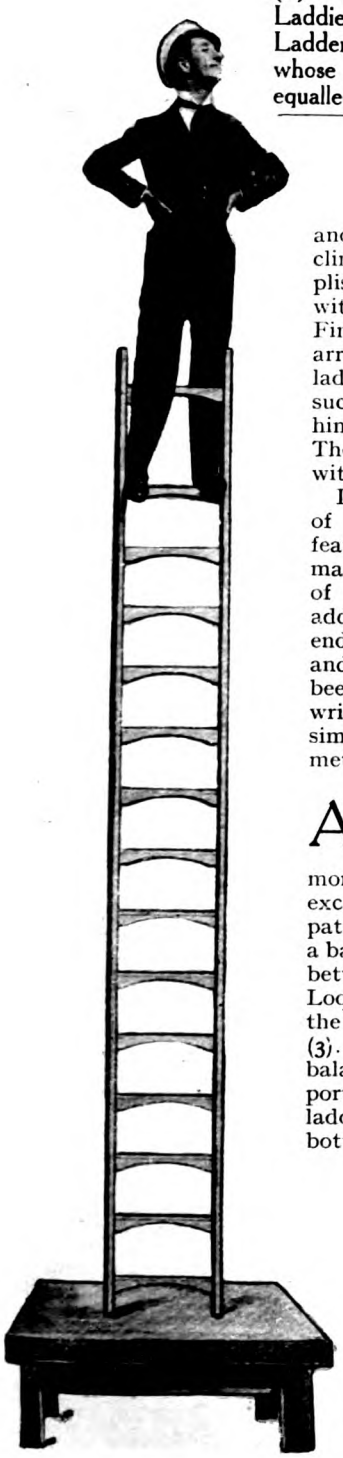
In conversation with Mr. Warton, the leader of the troupe, who is seen holding the chair, the writer learned that this feat took several years to perfect. "Since then," said Mr. Warton, "other performers have paid us the doubtful compliment of imitation; although I have not yet seen anybody else playing this sort of catch-ball with a full-grown man.

"Accidents? Yes, sometimes; but they are usually the result of sheer carelessness. When presenting our most difficult trick we are all of us on the alert, and an accident is rare; but it is in the simpler tricks, which have become so mechanical through repetition, that we sometimes find our minds wandering. Then, before we know where we are, there is a sprained wrist or a broken collar-bone. The chair trick which you have illustrated is very difficult because the man who performs the somersault never comes twice in the same direction. My partner and I often have to move very quickly backwards, forwards, or sideways to catch him."

A REMARKABLE feat, combining the precision and balance of the expert juggler with the grace and physical strength of the perfect athlete, is presented by the Engel Brothers (2).

Four upright steel posts are placed in position, on the upper ends of which are fixed spheres, also of highly-polished steel. On these are balanced two ladders, the bases of which are similarly formed. After a perfect poise has been attained—and this in itself is no simple task, for it is almost as difficult as balancing billiard balls one upon the other—the two brothers proceed in turn to mount the ladders inch by inch. The balancing of these highly-polished spherical surfaces demands the utmost care and precision, for the slightest jerky movement on the part of the performers would cause the ladders to slip

(2) In this delicate balancing feat, note the highly-polished spheres upon which the ladders are poised. The slightest jerk would dislodge them.



(3) "The Loquacious Laddie on the Tottering Ladder"—a patter comedian whose power of balance is equalled only by his humour.

and fall. The upward climb is therefore accomplished very slowly and with remarkable grace. Finally one of the men arrives at the top of the ladder and eventually succeeds in balancing himself on one arm. The descent is also made with meticulous care.

Lest the appreciation of such a remarkable feat as this may be marred by any suspicion of trickery it should be added that the spherical ends of these ladders and of the supports have been examined by the writer and proved to be simply balls of burnished metal.

ANOTHER performer who has risen to stardom — perhaps more on account of his exceptional ability as a patter comedian than as a balancer—is Du Calion, better known as "The Loquacious Laddie on the Tottering Ladder" (3). For the layman to balance himself unsupported on a vertical ladder, even on the bottom rung, is difficult

(4) Heavy-weight pyramid built by a troupe of Arabs —one man supporting nine others. (Note.—The face of the ninth man will be seen just above the head of the bearer.)

enough. Those who doubt this may try it for themselves. Du Calion, however, mounts to the very top of a fourteen-foot ladder, maintains his balance without using his hands, and remains in that position for at least ten minutes. Meanwhile he keeps the audience so thoroughly amused with his inconsequential chatter that they sometimes find themselves forgetting that the comedian is balancing himself at all.

Moreover, the foot of Du Calion's ladder stands upon a table not more than three feet square, so that the artiste's difficulty in balancing himself is increased by the risk of the ladder slipping off the table. Indeed, owing to certain drapery which Du Calion used in his act being blown by a breeze from the wings, his ladder actually slipped in this manner during his performance at a London hall not long ago, and the "loquacious laddie" came a nasty "cropper." Music-hall patrons will be pleased to know that Mr. Du Calion has now completely recovered.

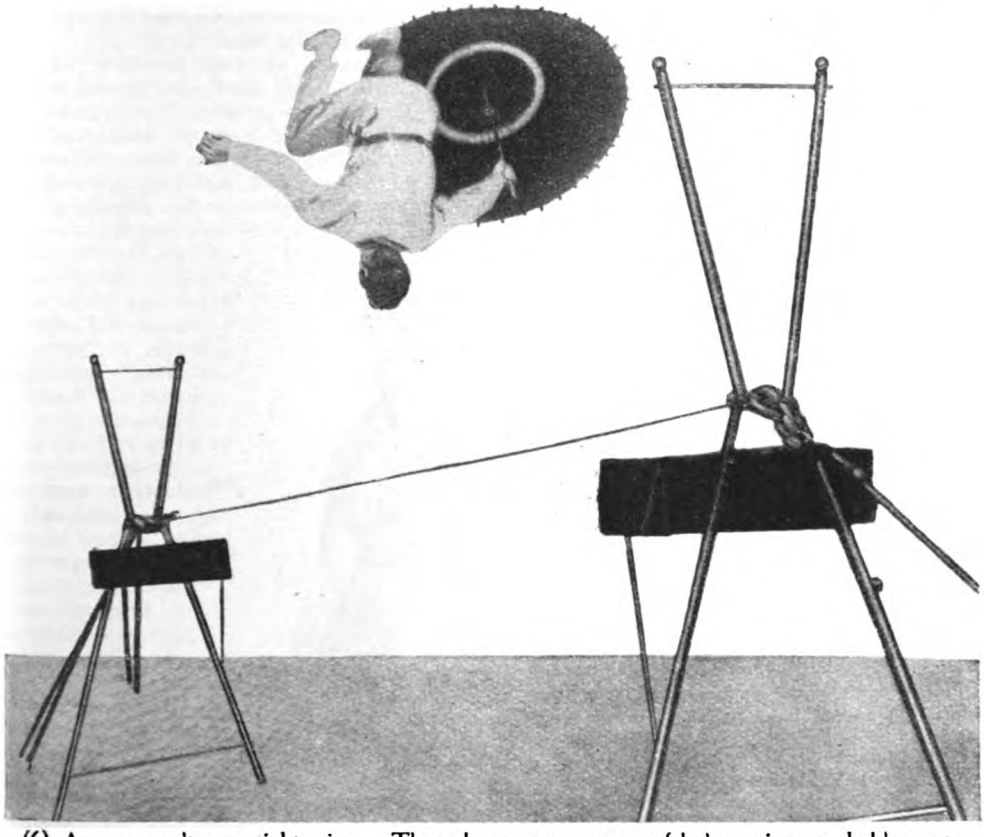
AMONG the feats of physical strength there are many worthy of mention. An Arab troupe of tumblers and whirlwind acrobats, known as "The Ten Taszerwoullth," specializes in the rapid building of pyramids—a performance which is both picturesque and sensational. The biggest member of the troupe, a sturdy fellow over six foot six in height, lifts the other members with the utmost *sang-froid*, and in the concluding pyramid he holds no fewer than nine men off the ground (4).

Among the most remarkable feats is that presented by Brinn (assisted by Mlle. Airos), which consists of balancing on the chin a genuine Douglas motor-cycle, complete with rider, and with the engine running at full speed (5). Members of the audience are invited to sit on the motor-cycle during the balancing.

Mr. Brinn claims that he is the only performer able to accomplish this feat. "My training and experience as a strong man," he said, "have made it possible for me to lift this enormous weight on my chin with comparative ease. But the principal difficulty with which I have to contend is the vibration of the engine. It took me over a year's practice before I could overcome this difficulty."

(5) Balancing on the chin a genuine Douglas motor-cycle and rider, with the engine running at full speed.

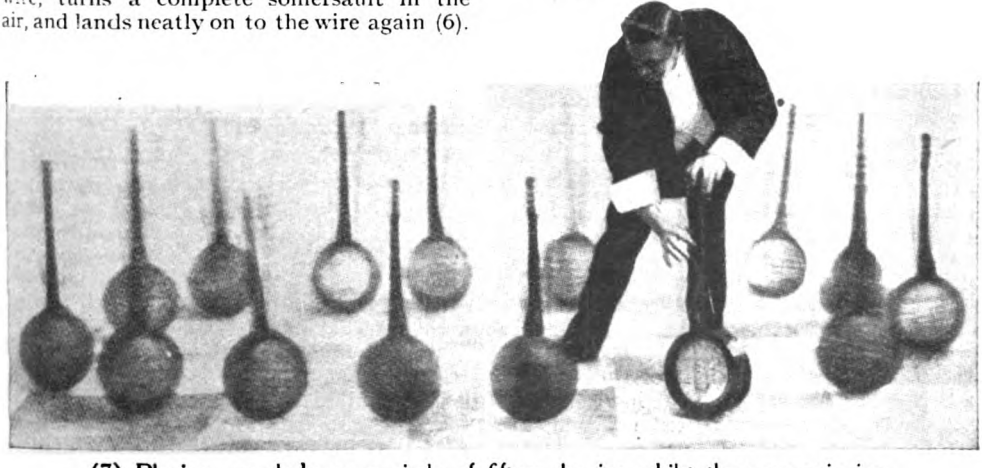
THERE are tight-rope artistes *and* tight-rope artistes. The public of to-day shows very little appreciation of a performer of the old school who merely walks the rope, balancing himself with a pole or a sunshade. Performers in this line of business, therefore, have been obliged to develop their art on far more original lines. The most remarkable accomplishment on the tight-wire is achieved twice nightly (or when he appears at London's principal home of popular variety, the Alhambra, in the afternoon also) by a gentleman named Togan, of Togan and Geneva. After the pair have given a



(6) A somersault on a tight-wire. The subsequent recovery of balance is remarkably neat.

demonstration of dancing, including tangoes, fox-trots, etc., in perfect rhythm on the wire, entirely without artificial aids to balance, Togan concludes with his star trick. Aided only by a paper parasol, to enable him to recover his balance, he springs from the wire, turns a complete somersault in the air, and lands neatly on to the wire again (6). It is not pleasing to imagine what would happen if he missed the wire!

To turn to performances which are less dangerous but no less wonderful, there is the banjoist, Franco Piper, who is a musician and a juggler too.



(7) Playing a melody on a circle of fifteen banjos whilst they are spinning.

His solo performances are incomparable, but in this article we are concerned mainly with his principal trick, which consists of playing a medley of popular songs on a circle of fifteen banjos, keeping them spinning round all the while! The preceding photograph (7), which speaks for itself, was taken whilst Mr. Piper was actually performing. It is interesting to note that this remarkable achievement cost its originator six hundred pounds in experiments alone.

THEN there is the little lady known as "Resista," who created a sensation last year with the announcement that she is able to change her apparent weight at will. She made her *début* in this country, as have many other performers mentioned in this article, under the auspices of the Moss Empires, Ltd., at their Finsbury Park hall.

"Resista" is an auburn-haired girl of twenty, five feet high, and, normally, weighs just over seven stone. In the course of her performance she walks among the audience, inviting all comers to take her by the waist and raise her as high as possible from the ground. At the first attempt to lift her she actually decreases her apparent weight to about five stone, and the average man is able to raise her from the ground as though she were a child. At the second attempt she resumes her normal weight of seven stone. At the third attempt she increases the resistance to such an extent that she seems rooted to the ground. To observe the struggles of burly men in their vain attempts to lift so slight a figure is as baffling as it is amusing (8).

(8) The girl who will not be lifted. The world's nine-stone champion weight-lifter attempting to raise "Resista," the American performer, who has baffled the strongest men.

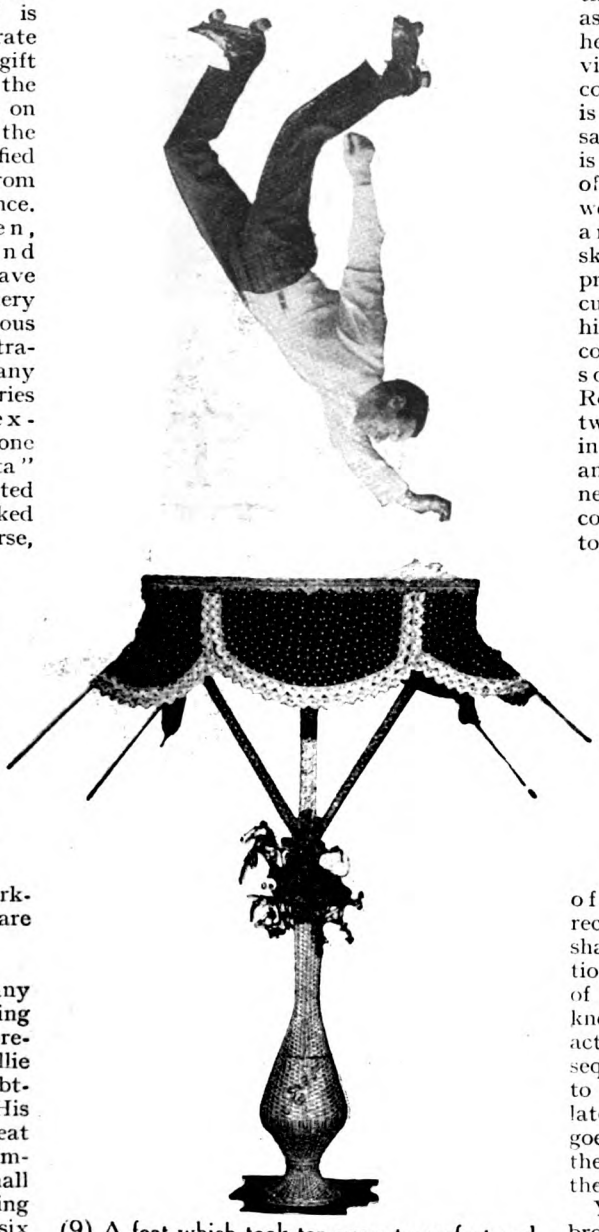
Occasionally, at this juncture, an exceptionally strong man who is accustomed to lifting heavy weights may succeed in raising her about half an inch from the ground. But "Resista" gives honour where honour is due, and tells her audience that the man in question has accomplished a rare feat—has, in fact, lifted against a resistance of fourteen stone. The problem, however, does not end there. "Resista" continues to increase the "resistance" even farther, until the man, who at first believed himself a conqueror, has to admit defeat.

Although such famous athletes as Jimmy Wilde, Joe Beckett, Jack Johnson, and the Arab gentleman of the Taszerwoullth troupe (depicted on another page in the act of lifting nine men), as well as W. A. Pullum, the nine-stone champion weight-lifter of the world, have all made the attempt, no man has yet succeeded in lifting "Resista" against her will. The last-named champion has established a record, having lifted her against a resistance of twenty-eight and a half stones, but even he had to admit himself beaten when "Resista" increased her weight beyond this amount. This little lady is also able to change her apparent weight whilst held in mid-air.

At the first attempt she seems as light as a feather, and one is able to raise her a considerable distance; but suddenly whilst on high she becomes heavy—and, despite frantic efforts to hold her up, she comes down like a ton weight.

It should be added that "Resista" is able to demonstrate her remarkable gift at any time—in the street as well as on the stage—and the writer has verified her claims from personal experience.

Medical men, scientists, and clergymen have tested the mystery woman at various private demonstrations, and many interesting theories have been expounded. Upon one occasion "Resista" was even requested to retire to a locked room, with a nurse, and change her clothing for a simple covering selected by a doctor; but it was soon demonstrated that whether dressed in her street clothes or in "tights" and "fleshings" (without even shoes and stockings) her remarkable powers are unaltered.



(9) A feat which took ten years to perfect and takes one second to perform. On a small platform twelve feet above the stage, Mr. Willie Rolls turns a somersault on roller skates, picking up a handkerchief as he goes.

OF the many roller-skating acts, that presented by Willie Rolls is undoubtedly the best. His concluding feat borders on the impossible. A small platform, measuring only two feet six inches square, is supported on a pedestal twelve feet above the stage. Standing on this precarious surface Mr. Rolls performs many clever evolutions on roller skates, including genuine buck-dancing, and finally turns a perfect somersault, picking up a handkerchief from the platform as he goes, and lands with his feet in exactly the same position as that from which he started (9). Obviously the perfect control of his feet is essential to his safety, and when it is realized that each of his roller skates weighs six pounds, amateur roller skaters will appreciate the difficulty of maintaining his balance at the conclusion of the somersault. Mr. Rolls has been twenty-eight years in the profession, and it took him nearly ten years of concentrated effort to perfect this feat, the performance of which occupies less than a second!

Although no variety programme worthy of the name would be complete without the inevitable "trick" performers, comparatively few of these turns receive their full share of appreciation. The majority of them are what is known as "silent" acts, and are consequently expected to appear whilst late-comers or early-goers are pushing their way to or from their seats.

Yet when we are brought to realize that their skill lies not so much in their actual performances as in the untiring energy and undaunted perseverance necessary to the accomplishment of their feats, we are bound to admit that there is a profound truth in the saying that "Genius is ten per cent. inspiration and ninety per cent. perspiration."

by

F. BRITTEN AUSTIN

ILLUSTRATED BY HENRY COLLER

GEORGE FLEMING was waiting for me on the platform as the train ran into Falmouth station—six feet of honest simplicity attired in a dirty sweater, a pair of disgraceful trousers unevenly turned up, and a battered pair of black shoes irregularly whitened with the incrustations of salt water. His weather-tanned and freckle-yellowed face lit up with a diffident grin as he saw me descend from my carriage.

"Jolly good of you to come, Dickie," he said, making me wince with his hand-grip. "I hope you won't be bored to death."

"Not a bit of it," I answered, cheerily. I don't pretend to be much of a yachtsman—though I may say I looked the part far more than George—but I had jumped at his invitation to a couple of weeks "knocking about" in Cornish waters. There is nothing better for city-jaded nerves than a rest-cure on a smart little yacht with a couple of hands or so to do all the rough work. "I've been looking forward to it."

Handing over my suit-case to a zealous small boy, my friend and I set out for the waterside. As we walked, I took stock of him. I had not seen him since last winter. My sister had got hold of him then, and, privately announcing her determination to civilize him, had lured him to several dances where he had presented a figure of pitiably uncouth and tongue-tied misery. I remembered that she had startled us to ribald laughter by an alleged discovery that he was "head over heels" in love with some friend of hers—what was her name?—some Irish girl. It was absurd, of course; George was the sort of fellow that can't look at a woman without getting red in the face. My reading of it was right. There had been nothing in it. The girl had gone back to Ireland, and George—we had rather lost sight of George. He was evasively reticent when I asked him what he had been doing with himself all the year. He had been "just pottering about" up and down the coast. We arrived at the quay.

"There she is!" he exclaimed, pointing to a small, dingy-sided craft, with what appeared to be a wireless aerial mounted on stick-like extensions of her two masts. She was moored to a buoy out among a flotilla of dainty yachts. "There's the *Eileen*—the one painted black." Had she been an America Cup challenger there could not have been more of affectionate pride in his tone. My heart went down with a bump.

"Why," I said, with a ghastly attempt at jollity, "she's a regular liner—wireless and all! That's wireless, isn't it?"

"Yes," he answered. "One of my hobbies, you know. I meant to have taken it down, but I had to be ashore pretty sharp this morning to get the stores in. Can't sail with the thing up, you know—gets horribly in the way."

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"Oh," I remarked (we were now walking along the quay to where a small boy in a dinghy was waving to us), "you don't use it at sea, then?"

"Good Lord, no! I only rig it up when we're all snugged down." (George's speech was apt to lapse into horribly clumsy antitheses, typical of him, somehow.) "I like to listen-in at night, you know, and hear all that's going on—broadcasted concerts and all sorts of things. Makes life heaps more cheery. It gets a bit dull sometimes all by one's self."

I stopped him on that quayside.

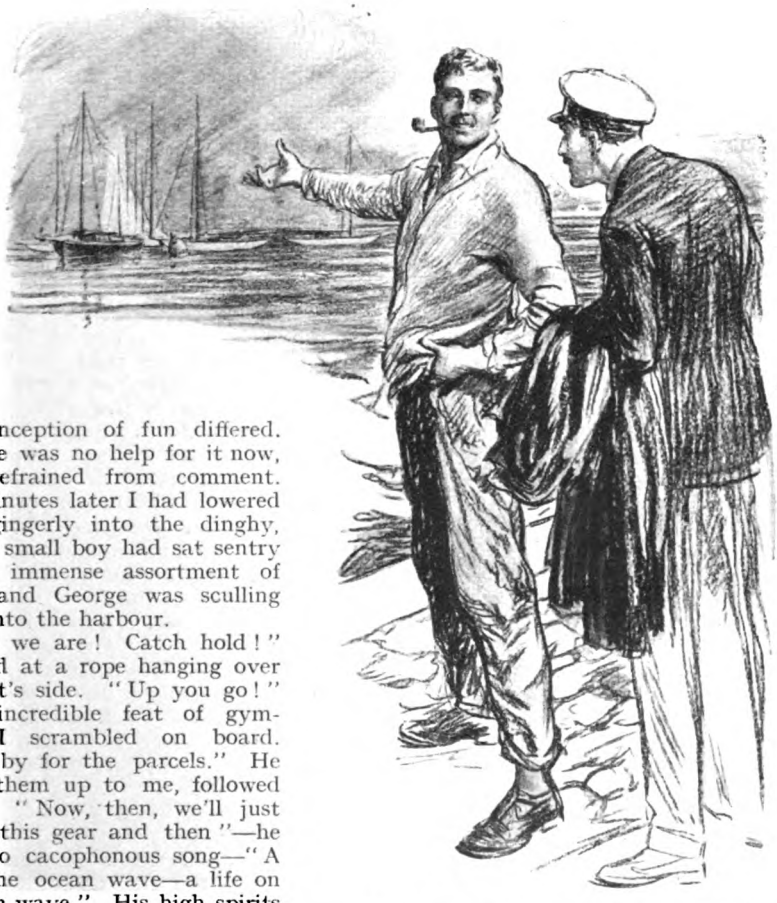
"George," I said, in alarm, "you don't mean to say you sail that yacht *alone?*"

He laughed. "Of course I do," he replied. "You didn't expect a skipper and a crew, did you? It's doing things by yourself that makes the fun of it. You'll soon see."

I remarked, by way of giving myself some sort of revenge.

He did not hear me. He had dived down the small companion into the cabin. "Sling 'em all down to me, my lad," he shouted out. "That's the idea." He encouraged me boisterously as I passed down the stores. For a minute or two he rummaged about below, and then he called to me, "Come and have a look round, Dickie." I squirmed down half-a-dozen steps and hit my head on the hatch. "Pretty snug, isn't it?"

The man who invented the word "snug" had a genius for tact. It is a charming way of saying that one is confoundedly cramped. There was a screwed-down table in the centre of the cabin, allowing one just space enough to slither round to an upholstered seat on each side. "Good head-room,



"There she is!" he exclaimed.

My conception of fun differed. But there was no help for it now, and I refrained from comment. A few minutes later I had lowered myself gingerly into the dinghy, where a small boy had sat sentry over an immense assortment of parcels, and George was sculling me out into the harbour.

"Here we are! Catch hold!" I grabbed at a rope hanging over the yacht's side. "Up you go!" By an incredible feat of gymnastics I scrambled on board. "Stand by for the parcels." He handed them up to me, followed himself. "Now, then, we'll just stow all this gear and then"—he burst into cacophonous song—"A life on the ocean wave—a life on the ocean wave." His high spirits were a hideous mockery of my own.

"You never could sing, George,"

isn't there ? when the hatch is up," he said, cheerily. I thought there might be. "It's up now, of course" he explained, and that illusion was dispelled.

"What's that ?" I asked, pointing to what looked like a closed desk against the forward bulkhead.

"Oh, that's my wireless set—built it myself," he said. "Show it you to-night. Haven't got time now. All hands on deck—and let's get clear of this confounded harbour !"

FOR the next few minutes I felt horribly in the way as George busied himself with the tangle of ropes on deck. In an amazingly short time the wireless was stowed, the jib and mizzen set, and then, almost before I had realized what was happening, we had cast off our mooring and George shouted to me to go to the tiller while he hauled up the mainsail. We began to move through the water.

"Topping breeze, isn't it ?" said George as he came aft and took the tiller from me. "I hate creeping out in a dead calm. It's a paraffin motor and stinks infernally."

"You've got an auxiliary engine, then ?"

"Yes. Jolly useful, you know, sometimes. It's under there," he said, indicating with his foot a closed hatch just in front of the tiller. "Look out for the boom ! I'm going to tack." I dodged to avoid the boom of the mainsail as the *Eileen* came up to the wind and heeled smartly to her new course. She curtsied prettily to the sparkling waves. "Yes, as I was saying, the auxiliary is jolly useful sometimes. No joke to get becalmed in a fog out in the Channel. Brutes think nothing of running you down."

He prattled on, thoroughly happy, while I sat on the deck, accommodating myself as best I could to its slope first to one side and then the other, and lit my pipe with more bravado than enjoyment. But enjoyment came to me as we sped over that ruffled sea, just foam-flecked, under the cloudless blue sky, with a kissing splash at our bows and a gurgle under our counter as the yacht lifted and dropped to the swell rolling in from the outer waters. The magnificent Cornish scenery slid away behind us, was soon but a background painted on the lower edge of the blue sky, as beautiful and unreal in the September sunshine as a panorama by an artist with an eye for atmospheric effects.

This is not a panegyric of the delights of yachting but the story of an adventure. George, looking over my shoulder, wants me to put in all sorts of technical details about the course we took, wind and tide and all the rest of it. I should only make a mess of them. Suffice it that to me the day was delightful, and that dusk saw us creeping towards a little cove at the other side of the Lizard where George said we should be snug against anything short of a westerly gale. The wind had gone down with the sun, and we had to use the motor to arrive at our anchorage.

The steak and onions over which, a little later, we sat in the little cabin were the perfect end of a perfect day. When the last morsel had vanished, George pulled out his pipe, filled and lit it.

"Wash up first," he ordained, "and then we'll hear what the great world has to say to us."

The great world seemed immensely remote, unreal, in this secluded cove, where the only sound was the faint *plash-plash* of water against the *Eileen's* hull as she rocked almost imperceptibly on the incoming tide. Emerging on deck from the lamp-light of the cabin, we seemed uncannily suspended in the blue night, far from the familiar earth, the brighter of the myriad stars above reflecting themselves in the glassy calm as though they shone from below us, in an illusion of encompassing cosmic space heightened by the hushed silence. Only at a second glance could the outline of the embracing cliffs be deduced rather than discerned from their dark occultation of blue infinity. As I slung over the washing-up bucket it splashed into ghostly phosphorescent fire.

George's cheery jocularities, making light of the task of washing-up, seemed incongruously out of place in that great silence. The eeriness of it was still upon me as we returned to the cabin.

He went briskly to what had looked like a desk against the forward bulwark of the cabin, lifted off the cover, revealed a complicated array of electrical apparatus, coils and knobs and switches, which utterly transcended my understanding. My ignorance of these matters, familiar enough to nearly every schoolboy nowadays, is singularly complete. The only objects I recognized, or thought I recognized, among those mysterious instruments were three ordinary electric light bulbs fitted upright in a row on a little black board. And when I looked more closely, I saw that even these were different from any I had seen. A little metal cylinder, open at the ends, fitted over the filament of each.

"Pretty good set, that, eh ?" remarked George, with a fictitious nonchalance that failed to disguise the pride in his voice. "Made it myself—every bit of it."

"Wonderful !" I said, with genuine respect. "And can you pick up wireless telephony as well as ordinary signals with

it ?" I expect it was an absurd question—I have a knack of being inane before these technical mysteries—but George only smiled tolerantly.

"Pick up anything that's going," he said. "You'll hear presently." He busied himself with fitting coils of wire into sockets and other little adjustments of the apparatus that were meaningless to me.

"Can you send messages as well as receive them ?"

"I *can*," he answered, frowning abstractedly at some little gadget that was obstinate under his fingers; "it means starting up the motor and connecting it with the dynamo. Still, there's not much point in it. I don't want to talk to anybody. I only want to hear. But I have found it useful sometimes—got my position more than once when I was in a fog. The shore station will give it to you. Cross-bearings, you know."

This meant nothing to me, but I refrained from further questioning. George had evidently completed his preparations. He gave me a telephone headpiece, with receivers fitting over both ears, and put on a similar one himself.

"NOW listen," he said. He switched on the three lamps, twisted a knob or two, manipulated a little lever with thumb and forefinger.

I heard a low confused murmuring that rose and fell as he played with that tiny lever, and then suddenly the faint sound of a human voice, out of pitch like a gramophone that is running down. He shifted the lever a fraction farther round the arc it traced, and a man's voice, startlingly loud and distinct, spoke into my ears.

"*Two L O closing down for three minutes!*" it said, with carefully deliberate enunciation. It made me jump, so unexpected was it.

"We've just missed a turn," said George. "That's London Broadcasting Station. Concert from eight to nine. Not bad for three hundred miles off, eh ?"

"Marvellous!" I exclaimed. To me, that voice coming out of the void was positively uncanny.

"We'll see what else is going on while we're waiting," he said. "Would you like to hear the ships talking ? They work on a six hundred wave-length. Two L O works on three hundred and sixty." He shifted the little lever a fraction, and I heard a multiplication of little low-toned raucously metallic buzzings, irregularly and rapidly reiterated. "That's Morse, of course," explained George. "There's half-a-dozen ships talking at once. Can you hear that louder one ? That must be quite close—ten miles off. And now the shore station's talking. Do you catch the different note ?"

It was weird to sit there in that little cabin of the anchored yacht and listen to those ships conversing with each other, unintelligible to me though were their messages, hundreds of miles away across the ocean some of them. George glanced at his watch and switched the lever back to its former position.

The buzzings of the ships ceased instantly. Instead, came that clearly distinct man's voice, louder than George's close beside me :—

"*Two I. O speaking. The next item will be a violin solo by Miss Sylvia Smith—Rubinstein's Melody in F. But before she begins I must warn listeners-in that we have again received serious complaints of oscillating valves. Will all listeners-in kindly see that their valves do not oscillate ?*" The human touch in that reproof coming out of the night was to me singularly impressive.

A moment later the violin solo began, as full and rich and sweet, the piano accompaniment as ripplingly clear, as if the performers were in that cabin with us. And they were three hundred miles away, with no tangible connection to that little yacht hid in a cove of the Cornish coast! And thousands of people in a vast radius from that distant city were listening to that music vibrating noiselessly through the night till it impinged upon a particular juxtaposition of wires connected to a telephone receiver, while all the time, uninterfered with, unperceived, the ships of all nations were talking together. To my mind, naïvely unsophisticated when it comes to the exact sciences, the whole thing was like magic.

I said as much to George when the violin finished and 2 L O once more shut down for three minutes.

He smiled. "You've only heard the fringe of it," he said. "We've only been on the low waves. Let's see what's happening on the higher ones." He took the couple of coils from their sockets, fitted a pair of larger ones, fiddled again with knob and lever.

My ears were filled with a confused mingling of high piping notes, like a lot of distant flutes trying to get themselves in tune. "D'you hear the difference on the high waves ?" he remarked. "Quite a different note." He adjusted his lever so that one series came clear, a rapid repetition of one squeaking sound. "That's one of the Transatlantic stations working. You can't pick it up—mechanically transmitted." He turned the lever again. "There's the Eiffel Tower—do you catch its call sign—F L—F L ?" I took his word for it. "They work on two thousand six hundred.

Now we'll see what Germany's doing. Listen! That's Königswusterhausen, two thousand eight hundred. They telephone only up to five-thirty. They're Morsing now. Nobody but London is telephoning at this hour."

"Is that the highest wave-length—two thousand eight hundred?" I asked.

"Good Lord, no! Some stations work on a much higher wave than that. Bordeaux works on twenty-three thousand four hundred and fifty. Would you like to hear it?" He fitted a yet larger pair of coils. "There's no telephony on these high wave-lengths. They're mostly used for Transatlantic telegraph work." He manipulated his lever. "Do you hear it? That's Bordeaux." I listened to the irregularly-repeated fluting note that had no translatable significance for me.

"And is that the highest your instrument will register?" I queried.

"No. I could catch anything up to thirty-five thousand. But there's no point in listening-in on those high waves. There's no one using them. Bordeaux is about the limit. But still, we'll have a try, if you like. Might hear a message from Mars!" he said, jokingly. "It was while listening-in on these unused series that Signor Marconi got his mysterious sounds." He made further adjustments of his apparatus.

There was dead silence. Concert, ships' messages, Königswusterhausen, Bordeaux, all alike were blotted from audition. I wondered whether anything had gone wrong with the instrument, so complete was that cessation of the ether-borne murmurs and pipings to which I had been listening.

"Nothing, you see," said George. "That was twenty-five thousand. We'll try a little higher." Again he altered the adjustment. "Twenty-eight thousand—nothing." Dead silence—save for the just-heard *plash-plash* of the waves against our craft. He moved the lever farther. "Thirty thousand—— Hullo!—what's that?" He glanced at me in sharp surprise. "Listen!"

"*Hullo, hullo, Adler! R.H.Q. speaking. Q Branch wants your report.*" The voice was loud and clear.

"What's R.H.Q.?" I asked.

"Hanged if I know!" replied George. "Listen!"

Another voice answered in what seemed to be guttural German. We couldn't catch a word of it.

The first voice spoke again.

"*Hullo, Adler! Fetch Mr. Maguire,*" it said, on a note of irritation. "*Herr Maguire bringen!*" The amateurish German was peremptory in its utterance.

"*Ja, ja,*" answered the second voice. "*Warten Sie nur.*"

There was a moment or two of silence.

"What have we got on to?" I asked.

"Can't imagine," said George. "It's a most unusual wave-length for telephony." He frowned at the instrument-board while we waited. Suddenly we both jumped at a new voice—a woman's voice on an accent of wild distress.

"*Help! Help!*" it cried. "*Help!—Oh!——*" The voice broke off abruptly, as though the speaker had been snatched away from the instrument. A sharp exclamation from George sent my eyes to him. He was staring in front of him, his broad, honest face twisted in a curiously tense and startled expression. At the same time I thought I heard an indistinct noise of scuffling from the receivers tight against my ears. But it was George's strange look that held my attention for the moment.

"No, it couldn't be!" he muttered, frowning. There was an odd, puzzled alarm in his tone. Before I could ask him what "couldn't be," a man's voice spoke, a different voice from those we had heard.

"*Hullo—R.H.Q.?*" Then, as though he half-turned his head to someone behind him, "*Take her away! Tie her up somewhere! How did she get loose?*" The voice was again clear and full into the telephone. "*Hullo—R.H.Q.! Maguire speaking. Is that Cassidy?*"

"*Sure!*" came the first voice. "*What's the report?*"

"*All O.K. Five thousand rifles, fifty machine-guns, one million S.A.A., and a hundred cases of grenades landed at rendezvous. Handed over to Captain Flanagan. No interference. We got to sea again at six o'clock.*"

"*Good! Say, Maguire, who was that girl screeching just now?*"

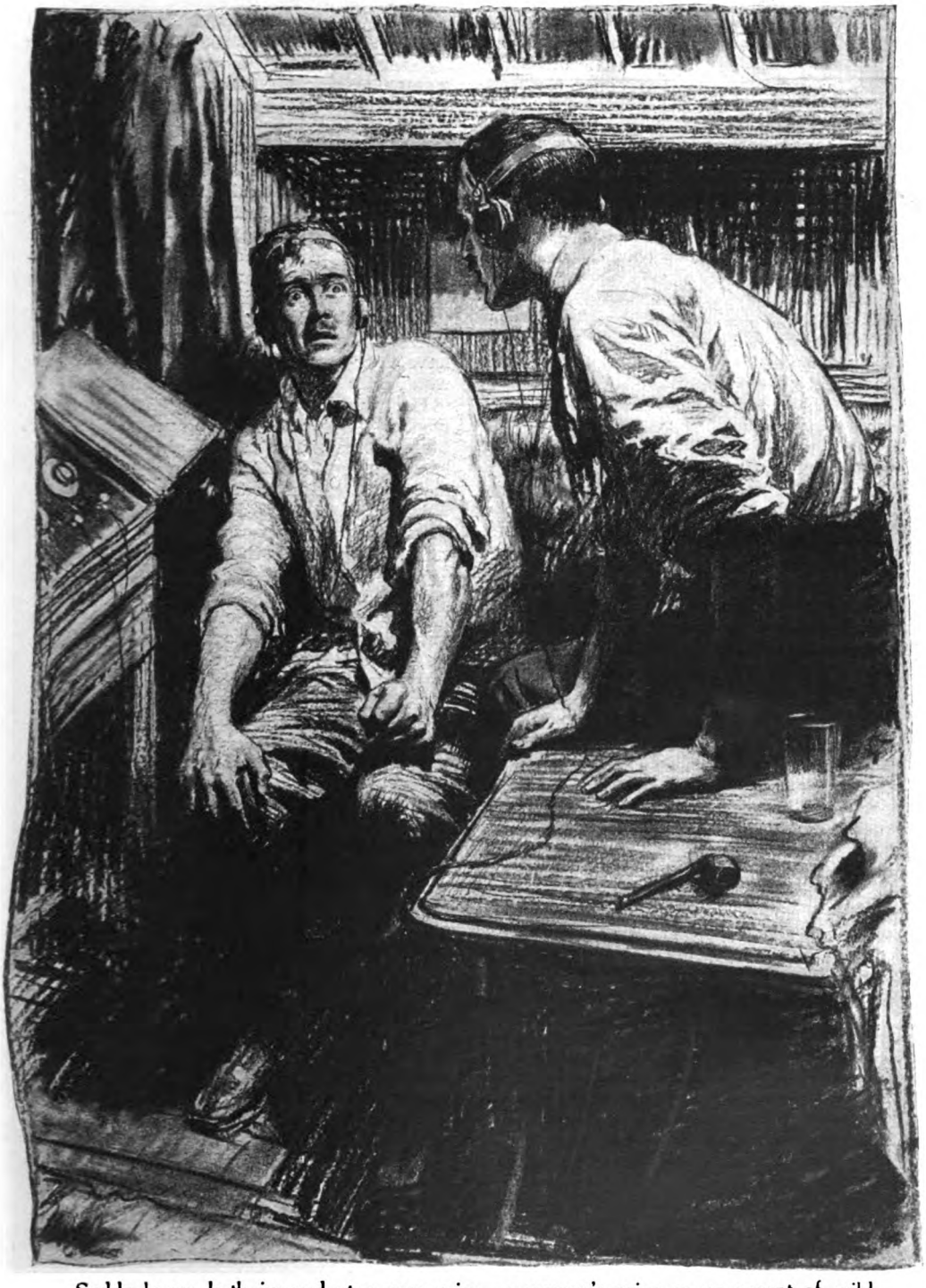
"*She—oh, she's a—a hostage.*" The awkwardness of the reply was plainly evident. "*Some of the boys got loose—burnt a big house near by. Belonged to a Free Stater. I managed to save the girl.*"

"*She don't seem grateful.*" The voice at the other end was cynical. "*I shall have to report it! What's the name?*"

"*Connolly.*"

"My God!" I glanced round to George. He had sprung to his feet, was trembling violently in every limb. His face was ashen as he stared round at the cabin walls as though expecting to see through them with a vision enhanced to the equivalent of his hearing. "My God!—did you hear that? Shh!" He stopped my half-uttered exclamation of bewilderment with a gesture of his quivering hand.

That far-off conversation was continuing.



Suddenly we both jumped at a new voice—a woman's voice on an accent of wild distress. "Help! Help!" it cried. "Help!—Oh——"

"*What name?*"

"*Connolly — Eileen Connolly. I've got evidence to prove she's an enemy sympathizer.*" The speaker was evidently a little uncertain of the way his action was being received. "*Father was James Connolly.*"

George uttered a wild, inarticulate cry, sank back on to the cabin settee like a man who could no longer stand. His face frightened me.

"*What's happened to him?*"

"*He's dead.*" The voice came with a little ugly laugh. "*The boys burnt him on his own bonfire.*"

"*A Free Stater, you say?*"

"*Sure. It's one less, anyway.*"

"*I'll report the matter. Hold your prisoner for instructions.*" The coldly official voice hinted at disapprobation. "*Your orders stand—you'll proceed to Hamburg and pick up the second consignment. Good night.*"

"*Good night.*"

The conversation ceased. There was silence. I turned to George. His face was ghastly, his eyes staring like those of a madman.

"It's her!" he said; "it's Eileen!"

"But who's Eileen?" I asked, bewildered. "Not——?" And then it flashed on me—my sister's friend!—Eileen Connolly, of course!—that flirtation of last winter!—the very name of George's yacht! "Good Lord!" I said, feebly. "I say, old man, I had no idea there was anything serious between you two."

"There isn't!" he snapped at me. "She refused me last winter. My God!" he went on, to himself, "Eileen! Eileen—in the hands of that murdering scoundrel!" He jumped to his feet, flung the earpieces from his head to the instrument-board, squirmed around the table to the few clear feet at the end of the cabin. I could only watch him helplessly as he paced up and down with his fists pressed hard against his temples. "Oh, I shall go mad in a minute!"

"But what has really happened?" I said.

"What?" He glared at me impatiently. "What's happened? You must be an imbecile, man! It's all clear enough. That's a German gun-runner chartered by the Irish Irregulars. Maguire's their agent on board. And the damned scoundrel's been doing a little raiding on his own account." He griped with both hands in the air. "If I could only get hold of him!" He took one or two more paces up and down, and then suddenly turned and flared at me. "My God, Dickie, don't sit there looking like a dummy! Don't you see that something's *got* to be done?" He was like a maniac.

"Yes, but what *can* we do?" I asked.

He stared at me, quietened suddenly.

"God knows!" he ejaculated, and sat down in a sudden lassitude of despair upon the settee. "God knows!" he repeated, looking around him with hopeless vacuity. "God knows!" And he buried his face in his hands.

THE silence in that little cabin lit by the slightly oscillating oil-lamp continued until I had to break the awful tension.

"George," I said, as quietly as I could, though I also found myself trembling with the excitement of this crisis that had come to us so suddenly out of the night, "if we're going to do anything about this, we must have clear brains for the problem. Hysterics won't help us."

He looked up, sobered. "You're right, Dickie," he said. "We must get our brains to work. I'm all right now." But he still shook like a man in a palsy, and his face was dreadful in its haggard pallor.

I dug out a bottle of whisky I had brought in my suit-case, poured some into enamel mugs for both of us.

"Now," I said, "drink this, and get yourself steady."

He came to the table, drank it down at a gulp. Then he went again to the wireless set, fitted the receivers again over his ears, listened.

"Nothing," he said. "They've shut off I thought perhaps——" He didn't say what "perhaps" it was he thought, though I could guess. That girl's terror-stricken voice was still ringing in my ears, too.

He stared at me hopelessly.

"For God's sake, say something, Dickie!" he burst out at last.

"I'm trying to think," I replied. "I dare say it's all plain enough to you—but it's anything but clear to me. I'm muddled. There's no doubt, of course, that it was a ship talking?"

"Bound for Hamburg—didn't you hear?" he said, irritably.

"Good. Well—whereabouts is she now?"

He got up, pulled out a chart from the locker. It comprised the southern coast of Ireland. There was a spot on it that had been well thumbed—as George's finger went to it now I had a sudden vision of him brooding alone o' nights in that cabin, bringing himself into a sort of contact with that girl by contemplating on the chart the place where she lived. I said nothing, waited for his words. He glanced up at the cabin clock.

"It's now nine," he said. "They put to sea at six. Three hours. She'd be a fast ship to dodge the patrols. Give her twelve knots. On a course for Hamburg,

she'd be about here." He marked a spot on the chart where the fathom-figures were already sparse by comparison with those close to the coast.

"And how far away is that?" I asked.

He got out another chart, placed it upon the table contiguous with the first, measured with a pair of dividers from the indicated point to the Lizard on the second chart.

"About one hundred and sixty miles."

"She'd pass close here, I suppose?"

"Yes." He made a mental calculation. "About ten o'clock to-morrow—if she does twelve knots. About one, if she's only a ten-knotter. But"—he looked up from the chart to me—"even if she does, how the devil are we going to stop her? We're not a torpedo-boat."

"No," I said, filled with a great idea, "but there are plenty of torpedo-boats at Plymouth. Can't we communicate with the authorities? Surely they would stop the ship?"

His brows puzzled over the suggestion.

"We could talk to the authorities all right," he agreed, "but I'm sure it would be no good. This is an Irish matter—and who bothers about the Irish these days? I don't think the British Government would interfere. They're only too anxious to let the Irish settle their own affairs. They'd merely suspect us of laying a trap to mix them up in a row—what the Irregulars have been playing for ever since the Free State started." I wondered at George's knowledge of these matters, and then remembered that he had the best of reasons for close interest. "Much more likely to send a torpedo-boat round to watch *us*," he concluded.

It seemed a hopeless problem, and I remarked as much.

"It's maddening!" said George. "But"—he glared at me as though I were responsible for our impotence—"somehow or other I'm going to get her off that ship!"

He listened again with the receivers over his head, and I imitated him. There was no sound, except the flapping of ropes overhead thrashing against the mast in a wind that had sprung up without our noticing it.

"It's not commencing to blow, is it?" I queried, uneasily.

George did not answer. All his faculties were absorbed in listening for a sound to come out of the silent night that encompassed our little craft. I imagined that distant ship, one hundred and sixty miles away, throbbing through the dark sea with that girl aboard of her. "Tie her up!"—that brutal command re-echoed in me. I wondered in what part of the ship she was held prisoner. This thought led me to another. I voiced it.

"I wonder how she—how Miss Connolly got to the wireless?" I said.

George snapped at me.

"Broke loose—didn't you hear that brute say so? I expect she was hiding somewhere round the wireless-house and heard that German fellow telephoning. Directly he went to fetch Maguire she must have dodged in, run to the instrument, and cried for help. Doesn't seem very difficult to me." He glared at me scornfully. "I can see her doing it."

"And why did they telephone in plain speech instead of the usual Morse?" I went on, not rebuffed. I wanted to get a clear picture of the whole thing in my head.

"Oh, don't ask futile, silly-ass questions!" George looked as if he could hit me for this repeated interruption of the silence to which he strained his faculties. "Why shouldn't they use plain speech? They're on a wave-length that nobody uses—there's no likelihood of anyone listening-in. Can you hear anything now? Of course you can't!—and we're on the thirty-thousand length. There's nothing doing on it—they've got it all to themselves. They might be talking from one star to another. And unless they use cipher, there's no sense in using Morse. Anyone can pick up Morse. But it's much more convenient to talk straight out—less chance of mistakes. They can talk direct without bothering about operators." George was irritably voluble once he started to explain, evidently trying to save time by answering in one complete reply any future stupid questions I might be going to put to him. "You exercise your wits on trying to think of some useful plan, Dickie—and don't worry me with things that don't matter!"

I DON'T know how long we had sat there in gloomy, baffled silence, when suddenly—I can't recall by what obscure path of thought I had come to it—I found myself contemplating a possibility.

"George," I said, on an impulse, "can't you talk to that ship?"

"Talk to the ship?" He puzzled at me.

"Yes." I was suddenly all excitement. "Talk to the ship—bluff them—tell them to hand their prisoner over to us. She's passing close by to-morrow morning."

He jumped up with such impetuosity as to hit his head against the cabin roof.

"By Jove, Dickie," he cried, "you've hit it!" He tore off the telephone receivers from his head. "Keep listening—in case they speak again. I'll start up the motor."

I stopped him before he had got out of the cabin.

"Wait a minute, George." I spoke with

the confident authority of the accepted strategist. My brain was working rapidly now. 'Don't telephone yet, whatever you do. Those people in Ireland may be listening. We don't want them butting in. Wait till after midnight. They will probably have gone to bed, but there's certain to be someone on duty on the ship."

"Dickie," he said, admiringly, "you're a genius!" He glanced at the clock. "Two hours." He looked at me, and the sudden excitement faded out of his face. "But—man—two hours! How am I going to wait two mortal hours cooped up here? I shall go mad!"

"No, you won't," I said, firmly. I fished a pack of cards out of my suit-case. "You are going to pour us out a little more whisky—not too much—and play a nice quiet game of piquet with me to pass the time."

He recovered control over himself.

"All right," he agreed "But keep those earpieces on. We mustn't miss any messages."

FOR the next two hours—they seemed an eternity—we sat there, alert for any sound in our ears, playing the most uninteresting game of piquet I have ever sat through in my life. Not a murmur came to us through the instrument. Only the three glowing electric-light bulbs reassured us that it was still receptive. Despite the headpieces, we could converse fairly easily, and there were many lapses in our game while we discussed the exact message George was to send to that German gun-runner. In other lapses, too, he told me, shyly and clumsily, something of his feelings for that girl. She was quite evidently the one thing in life that mattered to him. "It was only natural, of course, that she wouldn't marry a chap like him." And since he could not have her, he had hidden himself away on his yacht from a world that had become distasteful to him.

"If ever you fall in love, Dickie," he said, looking at me with honest, simple eyes, "you'll understand how much a chap wants to be alone. I only invited you because you knew her and could talk about her."

"Many thanks!" said I, ironically.

Overhead, the cordage drummed against the mast in sharp little puffs of wind.

"I'm afraid you're in for dirty weather to-morrow," said George, with an anxious glance at the barometer.

We continued our dreary game, forgotten for long intervals in George's halting confidences. "She'll never have me, of course," he said, resignedly and miserably.

"Your call," I reminded him.

We were half through a hand, when suddenly he flung down the cards, sprang from his seat.

"Midnight, thank God! Now we can get busy!"

In a moment he had disappeared up the companion steps. A minute or two later I heard and felt the jerky throbbings of the motor as it whirred and flagged and whirred again in its first uneven revolutions. A nauseating atmosphere of paraffin invaded the little cabin. The motor settled into a steady hum where everything vibrated. George returned, wiping his hands on a bit of cotton-waste.

He went to the wireless, fitted a mouthpiece to a gadget in front of him, manipulated a few more tiny switches. Then, putting on his receivers, he sat down to it again. I drew close, listening also, my heart thumping with excitement.

"Hullo—*Adler!* Hullo—*Adler!*" He leaned forward, spoke into the mouthpiece. I could see perspiration glistening on his forehead. "Hullo—*Adler!*" He switched to receive the reply.

There was no response. George glanced at me—a quick, scared look. My thought was the same as his. Supposing there was no one listening on board that ship!

"Hullo—*Adler!—Adler!—Adler!*" He fumbled a little with his tiny levers, altering them a trifle at each utterance of the call. "*Adler! — Adler! — Adler!*" Again he flicked down the switch which permitted the reply to reach us.

It came—startling us both with its uncanny loudness of direct address.

"*Ja, ja, Adler—ja. Wer ist's?*"

"*Adler*—R.H.Q. speaking. Fetch Mr. Maguire. *Herr Maguire bringen!*" He turned to me, whispered: "What's 'at once'?" "*Sofort — augenblicklich,*" I whispered back. "*Sofort—augenblicklich!*" he commanded peremptorily into the telephone.

"*Ja, ja—he sleep—I go wake him,*" came the answer, distinct despite the throbbing of the motor behind us.

George turned to me, the telephone switched off for safety.

"I daren't ask to speak to her, I suppose?"

I shook my head.

"Too risky."

We waited, through long minutes of silence.

Then again a voice came to us, gruffly, bad-tempered.

"*Hullo—hullo—who's that speaking?*"

George's face went grim and hard as he bent forward to reply. It was as if he felt himself face to face with the owner of that now familiar voice.

"R.H.Q.," he said, sharply, authoritatively. "Is that Maguire?"

"*Yes. Is that Cassidy?*"

"No, it isn't." George, as he explained to me afterwards, tried to speak with the brusque peremptoriness of a wartime "brass-hat." "This is Intelligence speaking. Q Branch reports that you have a prisoner on board—a Miss Connolly. She is urgently required at H.Q. for examination. A most important prisoner. She is to be handed over without delay. In the meantime, you will be held personally responsible for her safety."

"*Oh,*" said Maguire—there was a trace of disappointment in his tone—"*shall we put back then?*"

"No." George made a gesture of "Heaven forbid!" to me. "What time do you pass the Lizard to-morrow?"

"*I don't know.*"

"Go and find out from the captain!" George's tone could not have been bettered by the most important of staff officers.

There was a pause in which we listened to nothing but the throb of our own motor working the dynamo.

"*About eleven,*" said the voice suddenly.

"Very well. Tell the captain to go close in to the Lizard. You will be met by a small yawl, flying the signal-flags R.H.Q. Answer with the same flags, and then send your prisoner aboard of her."

"*But who am I to hand her over to?*"

"Agents of ours. We've already arranged. All you have to do is to obey your orders." We were fairly safe in assuming that he would not query what to him would be merely another of the mysterious ramifications of the Irregular organization. "Just repeat, please."

The voice repeated the instructions.

"Very good," said George. "Remember—on no account miss that yawl. It might have the gravest consequences—and you will be held responsible. Good night."

"*Good night.*"

There was once more silence.

George turned to me.

"And now to wait till morning!" he said.

We agreed to take alternate watches at the wireless in case any further conversation took place with the *Adler*. George was to have first watch. Utterly wearied by my long day, I rolled myself in a blanket on the settee and was almost instantly asleep.

I WOKE to find the light of morning pouring through the skylight and George no longer there. The place shook with the throbbing of the motor and the yacht was pitching heavily. I could hear the thud and splash of seas upon the deck. Mystified, I made my way, lurching and scrambling, to the companion-stairs, and climbed out. George, still wearing the telephone receivers attached by a long wire which went down into the cabin, was in oilskins, steering the yacht through a smother of spray. No sails were hoisted. She was running on the motor.

"Had to clear out!" he shouted at me. "Weather's been worsening since dawn. Not a word from the *Adler*. Take the tiller while I get a rag of canvas up. We've got sea-room now and can heave-to for a bit."

It was a foul morning. A heavy westerly wind drove a grey wrack of mist and rain over a livid green sea that leaped and boiled at us as our motor thudded us through it. The Lizard was a cloudlike mass only faintly to be discerned far astern of us. I kept the *Eileen* bows-on to the sea while George, having put on my head the receivers he had been wearing, struggled with the canvas. At last, close-reefed and helm lashed, the engine stopped, we hove-to for a mouthful of cold breakfast down in the cabin.

He had looked pretty bad the night before. This morning he looked ghastly, dark rings under his eyes, his features pale and drawn. He had not had a wink of sleep. "No sense in waking you, old chap," he said. "I couldn't have slept, anyhow."

It was an interminable and miserable time waiting for that ship. George lent me a suit of oilskins, and with the receivers on the long wire over my ears I sat on the cabin steps and talked to him while he steered. "Don't leave them off for a moment," he had said. "We mustn't miss a word if they speak. I'll navigate the yacht."

Directly after breakfast he had set a course for a point just off the Lizard, and then, in heavy blinding squalls of rain, buffeted by a sea that grew worse every minute, we cruised up and down in the vicinity of the spot where we might expect to meet the *Adler*. Our three signal-flags blew stiffly out from the halliards.

"There she is!" cried George, suddenly.

Out of the mist emerged a small and dirty-looking tramp steamer, the black smoke blowing forward over her bows as she wallowed in the following sea. I stood up on the cabin steps to look at her, saw three flags run up to her signal-halliards.

George put the helm over and we came round, beating up towards her, manœuvring to get under her lee.

"She's stopping," said George. "Look! They're getting ready a boat!" I could, in fact, see a little group of figures busy about one of the davits.

George set the motor on at full power, and, pitching and plunging under close-hauled canvas among the waves that crashed

He hoisted the girl upright and pushed her into my grasp. I dragged her on deck in a tumbled heap.

over our bows, we came close to her. She had now stopped, was squattering amid creamy-white foam. From her deck men were scrambling into the boat still slung upon the davits.

"There's Eileen!"

George's eyes were quicker than mine, but I also now saw a muffled-up figure hurried by two men along the deck and pushed into the boat. Then they began to lower away. Breathlessly we watched the boat descend on the lengthening ropes, swinging and swaying sickeningly as the steamer lurched and wallowed in the waves. At last it touched the water, was out of sight for a moment, while the davit ropes, released, streamed on the wind.

"Here they come!"

The boat rose on the sea, four oarsmen rowing for all they were worth. Steadily it approached, out of sight one moment, hoisted high the next. In the stern-sheets I could see two figures; one of them, certainly, the girl. George brought the yacht up to the wind, kept her steady with the motor at half-speed.

The boat was a little more than half-way to us when suddenly a voice spoke into my very ear.

"*Hullo, Adler! Hullo, Adler!*"

Intent on watching the approach of the boat from my position on the cabin steps, I had forgotten that the wireless receivers were still over my ears.

"*Hullo, Adler!*"

"They're calling, George," I cried. "Calling up the *Adler*."

He glanced at me, but said nothing. I saw his face set hard as he measured with his eye the distance yet between ourselves and the boat.

"*Ja, ja—Adler! Wer ist's?*" came the reply.

"*R.H.Q. Where's Mr. Maguire?*"

"*Herr Maguire—he vos in boat.*"

"*Boat? What do you mean? I want to talk to him. Fetch him at once. Orders for his prisoner, tell him!*"

The other voice commenced an explanation in broken English.

"Never mind what they're saying," shouted George. "Take those things off and stand by to help her out of the boat. I can't leave the helm."

I DID as I was told. The highly interesting conversation between "R.H.Q." and the *Adler* ceased for me abruptly. I could only guess at its purport by the figure I saw dart out of the wireless-house and run to the officer on the bridge. A moment later the propeller of the ship began to revolve and I saw a wisp of white steam blow away from half-way up her funnel. The melancholy wail of her siren drifted across to us.

"They've discovered the trick, George," I shouted, in alarm.

"Never mind," he said. "It's too late now. Stand by to pull her on board."

The boat rose on a wave just in front of us. The men had ceased rowing, were looking back at the ship, puzzled at her signal. The yacht was under way, and the next instant, swung by a deft touch on her tiller, was grinding alongside the ship's boat. A couple of men clutched at the rope we had slung ready alongside. Once more the steamer's siren hooted long and loud. She was moving through the water now, coming straight towards us.

"All right," I shouted to the man in the stern-sheets. "There's a destroyer coming up—that's all. She wants you to get back as soon as possible. Pass up the girl."

There was no time for hesitation with the two boats grinding against one another in that sea. He did the instinctive thing, hoisted the girl upright by main force—she drooped as though she were half fainting—and, seizing the moment, pushed her into my grasp. I dragged her on deck in a tumbled heap.

"All clear!" I shouted, but George had not waited for my word. He set the motor to full speed, put the helm over, loosed the mainsheet ready to his hand. The yacht whipped round like a top. I just heard an angry shout from the boat's crew—and then we were already distant from them.

The steamer was coming for us as though she meant to run us down, sounding her siren in quick and angry blasts.

"Don't matter about them," cried George, as the yacht flew on before the wind. "They'll be half an hour picking up their boat's crew—and we're well away. Look after *her*."

I bent over the girl. She lay huddled upon the deck, staring at me with a face blanched with terror. Then she looked at the man at the helm.

"*George!*" she cried.

Behind us the *Adler* was blotted out in a squall. The *Eileen* changed course slightly, raced, like a living thing, for safety.

"Please, Sir, The Plumber!"

by

A. NEIL LYONS

ILLUSTRATED BY C. GLOSSOP

THE man from Brown's, in a clean white apron, came to the door of the new scullery and wiped his paint-brush on the new mat.

"All right, Jock!" he exclaimed.

Jock, who wears two pairs of trousers (blue on top) and only takes his orders from Mr. Black, got up from his bucket and faced the man from Mr. Brown's.

"Don't meantersay you're *done?*" he remarked.

"Well," remarked the man from Brown's, "we're done *so far*. You can start now. When you got the pipes in, we'll kerry on."

"It's only twelve o'clock," said Jock. "We've only bin waitin' 'ere since seven. Can't you keep us idle for a little longer?"

The man from Brown's was used to plumbers. He smiled good-humouredly, moving his brush, with cleanly deliberation, to a fresh area of mat.

The man from Black's entered the scullery. "Ha!" he exclaimed, casting a swift glance around him. "This is a cutting-away job." He then returned to the doorway, and putting both hands to his mouth, he uttered loudly the word, "Hoy!"

Wiped his paint-brush on the new mat.

"Hoy!" An answering call, which might have been an echo of his own, came out of a shed, where Jock's subordinate had retired to take tobacco.

"Fetch along the tool-bag, Will!" thundered the voice of Jock. "'Urry up! There's a cutting-away job 'ere."

Will, who also wears two pairs of trousers, although he is hardly more than fourteen years of age, then emerged from the shed and hastened, almost ran, to the scullery door, carrying hammers and chisels and other heavy objects in his hand. The man from Brown's, having finished my mat, sat down on Jock's bucket. Then Jock began to whistle; I retired to my workroom, happy in the thought that we were at last getting in sight of the pump.

Had I forgotten to mention the pump before? Oh, well! It has no real importance — except that it happens to be connected with the presence in my house of Jock and William and the man from Brown's.

Things did not move very rapidly in my workroom, because of the activities of Jock and William, who were cutting away rather loudly in the adjacent room. I should not, however, have dreamed of interrupting them if they had not cut away my framed portrait of Dr. Watts. A chisel, a brick, and a hammer-head extruded themselves quite unexpectedly from the bosom of that remarkable saint; and the sight provoked me.

"Gorn through into your sitting-room,

'ave we?" said Jock, when I mentioned the circumstance to him. "I 'ardly *think* so, sir."

I still ventured to believe the evidence of my own eyes.

"That's a very curious thing, then," said Jock, thoughtfully. "We was aimin' for the crorse-tie to kerry our pipe. Where are we now, then?"

"Just below the first waistcoat button," I replied.

Jock looked at me curiously. He was too well-mannered (being a foreman perforator) to ask me to repeat my answer. "P'r'aps I'd better come in and look," he said.

He came in. He looked. "R!" said he, with a cheerful smile. "I see now what we're playin' at. It's a very funny thing, but I forgot to allow for the kink in the flue. A funny thing. That flue's bin settin' me crooked all along. That's the *third* carry-through I've had to make, and we ain't found the crorse-tie yet. A funny thing!"

"It's a funny thing, but I forgot to allow for the kink in the flue."

I followed him into the scullery, and found that it was even as he had said. Two preliminary carry-throughs had been carefully effected, each of which let air and light into the flue of my workroom fireplace.

"Will it work like that?" I inquired.

"Will what work?" demanded Jock.

"My study fireplace."

"Like what?"

"Like that: with all those holes in it?"

"Go' bless my soul," responded Jock. "Don't you worry about them little 'oles, sir. We shall make them good all right—*some* time er other."

I was going to ask him to fix an approximate date for this good work, but he happened to look at his watch, and immediately lost consciousness—in the professional sense. "Hoy, Will!" he exclaimed. "Din-*ner!*" At which words Will descended in haste from the scullery ceiling and hurried out of doors to find a bucket for Jock.

Jock sat on his bucket for an hour, eating one thick sandwich, while William, sitting on a nail-bag and eating another thick sandwich, listened attentively, but in thoughtful silence, to his foreman's pessimistic views on modern cricket.

The man from Brown's, meanwhile, went into the scullery and cleaned a few more brushes. And Dr. Watts suddenly discharged the hammer from his bosom, and broke a Brittany vase.

At ten minutes past two Jock and William, having reprimanded Hobbs and buried all other cricketers, returned to the scullery ceiling and knocked two more holes in Dr. Watts. They then knocked a further hole in the workroom fireplace. They then, to their intense surprise, and palpable annoyance, blundered right on the cross-tie, which piece of carelessness put an end to all the frolic. Jock came down, and going to the scullery door called out:—

"All right, Fred!"

The man from Brown's looked up. "What d'ye mean: 'All right'?" he inquired.

"We've done—so far," explained Jock. "You can start again now."

"What d'ye mean: 'Start again'?" said the man from Brown's. "Meantersay you've fixed that pump since dinner-time?"

"Pump!" echoed Jock "'Oo spoke about a pump? We ain't on'y jest found the crorse-tie. I want you to come in 'ere an' make good."

"What d'ye mean: 'Make good'?"

"This flue 'ere," explained Jock, affably. "It's a bit on the skew, Fred. We carried through into the gentleman's droring-room here—and there. I want you to come in and make good, afore I gets on to the pump."

"Not me, Jock," replied the man from Brown's, decisively. "I can't start till you got the pump fixed. You get the pump fixed. I'll start quick enough then."

Jock still sustained his air of quiet persuasiveness.

"You see, Fred, I likes to 'ave my work made good be'ind me. It wouldn't be right for me to start, not until you'd made it all good be'ind me."

The man from Mr. Brown's shook his head. "No good arstin' me to come in till you've got the pump up," he insisted.

"Make it good be'ind me, then, an' I'll *get* the pump up," said Jock.

"You — get — the — pump — fixed," insisted Fred.

Jock's nose turned very white. "I don't take my orders from you," he cried. "I on'y takes my orders from Mr. Black."

"Then you'd better find Mr. Black," retorted the man from Brown's. He smiled —a slow, ungenerous smile.

"That's just what I'm a-goin' to do," declared Jock, walking briskly to the gate. "Hoy, Will!" he bellowed. And William, setting fire to a minute portion of cigarette, hastened after him.

The man from Brown's sat silently on his bucket. If he had been a Frenchman he would have shrugged his shoulders.

There followed a period of suspense and monotony, diversified only by one slight incident. Dr. Watts, with a sudden, audible shiver, shed a chisel.

At last, with the approach of dusk, the lissom figure of young William hastened past my window-pane, followed by the less lissom figure of big Jock, which, in turn, was followed by the earnest, thoughtful figure of Mr. Brown, which again was closely pursued by the eager figure of Mr. Black.

"Now we shall hear something," I remarked, confidentially, to Dr. Watts.

When we had heard it for ten or twelve minutes, and the tumult still raged, I thought that the time had come to go out and arbitrate. So I went out.

"The difficulty," I said, "seems to be that Mr. Black's man is of opinion that he has made as many holes in my house as he can honestly be expected to make in one act. He says that he can't make any more holes until Mr. Brown's man has intervened. Mr. Brown's man, on the other hand, says that he can't intervene until Mr. Black's man has made some more holes. Therefore, we have a deadlock. What is the solution?"

"Ding! ding! ding! ding! ding!" replied the parlour clock.

The man from Mr. Brown's immediately got up from the bucket and put on his coat.

"Of course, sir," said Mr. Brown, "I ain't got a word of complaint to make against *you*. *You've* always be'aved like a gentleman, sir."

I thanked Mr. Brown.

"And I hope, sir," said Mr. Black, "as you will allow me to say the same."

I thanked Mr. Black.

"You see, sir," pursued Mr. Black, confidentially, while Mr. Brown, respectfully uncovering his head, went into the scullery to verify the holes—"you see, sir, it is rather hard lines on us plumbers, the way we sometimes git put about by these builders. They're glad enough to make use of our skill, sir, but——"

I nodded.

"And yet," continued Mr. Black, "where would they be, sir, if it wasn't for our skill?"

Again I nodded, knowingly. "Your mention of skill reminds me, Mr. Black," I said, "to ask you: what about these holes?"

"Well, sir," responded Mr. Black, "it's gorn five o'clock, sir. My men go home at five."

Looking round, I saw that Mr. Black had spoken the truth.

"But," said Mr. Black, "I

Jock sat on his bucket for an hour, eating a thick sandwich, while William listened to his views on modern cricket.

At last, with the approach of dusk, the lissom figure of young William hastened past my window-pane.

could send again on Wednesday. We are rather busy. But I could send again on Wednesday."

"It's Friday now," I mused.

"Yessir," assented Mr. Black. "Tomorrow, you see—Saturday—that don't 'ardly count as a day at all. But I'll try to send on Wednesday. See any 'oles there, Mr. Brown?"

"Yes," responded Mr. Brown, "there's a tidy few 'oles." Mr. Brown came out of the scullery as Mr. Black went in.

"It's a pity about this, ain't it?" said Mr. Brown in a sort of whisper. "Knockin' 'oles into the place! These plumbers are all alike. My man's gorn 'ome now—'e knocks off at five—but I'll try to send again on Wednesday."

"Couldn't you make it Thursday?" I suggested. "I'm expecting—er—visitors on Wednesday."

"Thursday'd suit me *better*," replied Mr. Brown. "I'm *rather* busy. The fireplace won't come to no 'arm waitin' till Thursday—not if you don't light any fires in it. Are you comin' my way, Mr. Black?"

Mr. Black came out of the scullery. "Certainly I am, Mr. Brown," he said.

I opened the door for them and watched them walk into the murky road, their shoulders very close together.

Both gentlemen bowed to me.

"Next Wednesday, then," said Mr. Black, "and thank you very much, sir."

"Thursday, sir, thank you, sir," said Mr. Brown.

I opened the door for them and watched them walk into the murky road, their shoulders very close together. I went back into my sitting-room and listened to the wind as it came hooting down the chimney in and out of the holes. Then I got a sack and covered up the new, untarnished pump, which lay on a sodden grass plot, forgotten by everybody.

How I Prepare My Speeches

by

WELL-KNOWN PUBLIC SPEAKERS

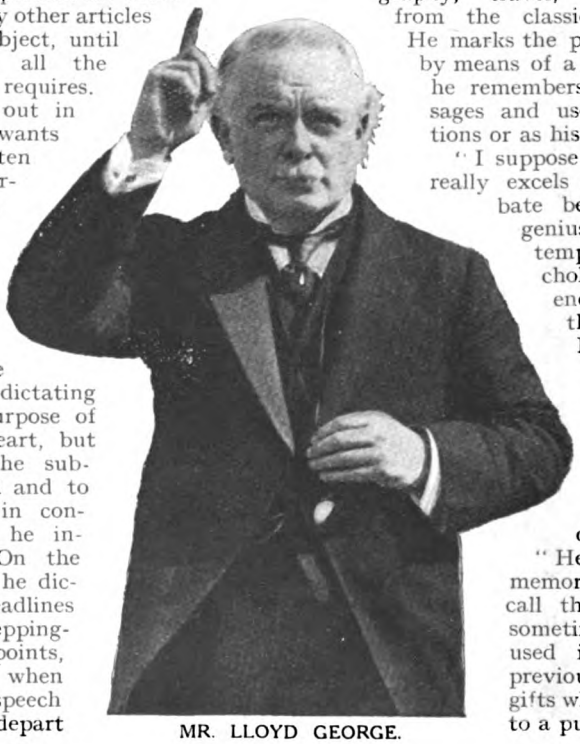
Mr. LLOYD GEORGE.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE'S secretary writes: "If Mr. Lloyd George has a big speech to make in the House, say on unemployment, he first of all consults leading business men or experts, or gets them to submit their views in writing. He then peruses all these documents, and any other articles bearing on the subject, until he has absorbed all the information he requires. Next he sketches out in his mind what he wants to say, very often some view put forward by an expert starting a train of thought which he develops. He then jots down on a bit of paper a rough skeleton of the speech, afterwards dictating it, not for the purpose of learning it by heart, but in order to get the subject into his mind and to help him shape in concrete form what he intends to say. On the day of his speech he dictates a few headlines which act as stepping-stones to his chief points, and quite often when he has prepared a speech like this he will depart entirely from his notes and rely upon his instinct and his skill in Parliamentary debate as to what to say, so that one never knows what he is going to say until he has actually said it.

"In addition, Mr. Lloyd George is a voracious reader, and after a hard day's work he will sit up reading history, biography, travel, and translations from the classics and so forth. He marks the parts he reads, and by means of a wonderful memory he remembers the marked passages and uses them as quotations or as historical parallels.

"I suppose Mr. Lloyd George really excels in impromptu debate because he has a genius for sensing the temper and the psychology of his audience, and some of the best speeches I have ever heard him make were entirely impromptu, and the ideas and arguments were conceived during the speech of an opponent.

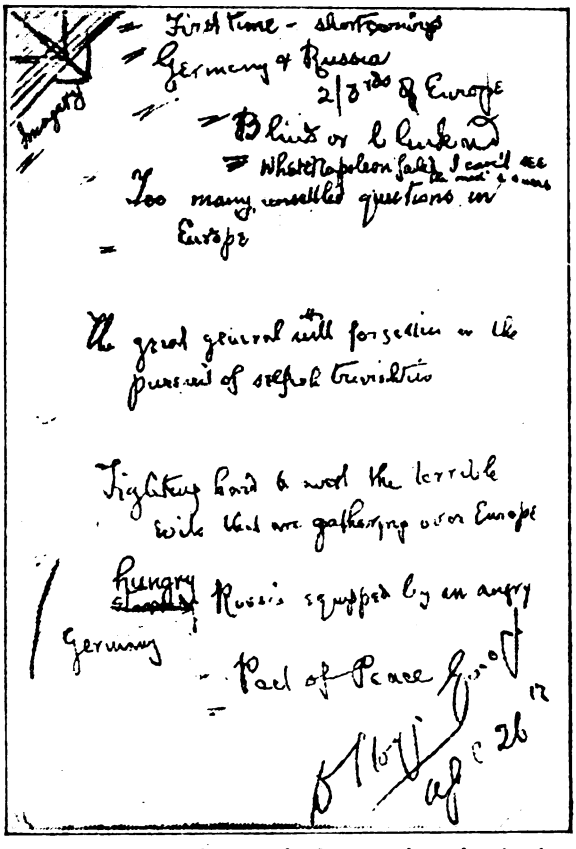
"He has a marvellous memory, and he can recall the arguments and sometimes the phrases he used in speeches years previously. All these are gifts which are invaluable to a public speaker."



MR. LLOYD GEORGE.

THE LORD BISHOP OF CHELMSFORD.

You ask me how my speeches are made. I am a modern Bishop, and therefore, alas! my addresses have to be thought out and made in all kinds of places excepting the one place where they ought to be made—*in my study*. The train, the motor, the bus, and the tram all become the study of the Bishop, in which he has to do his work. This, in itself, is a great danger, and work under such conditions cannot be of the best, but it has one advantage, if not carried to excess—that it causes the speaker to tend to become more practical and less theoretic and deep. In days gone by the Bishops were apt to overlook to a great extent the study of industry, and of the lives and modes of the working classes, and to confine themselves to what may be termed a more scientific presentation of the doctrinal formularies of the Church. I try, in making my address, to keep in mind the condition of the patient I am trying to help to a healthier life, physically, morally, and spiritually. For the reasons I have already stated, and also because I believe that an extemporary address, excepting under very special circumstances, is likely to be more effective than one which is written, I invariably avoid the manuscript in either the pulpit or on the platform. I use brief notes with headings so as to preserve some sequence of thought, but I leave, until I am upon my feet, the exact words which I shall use to express what is in my mind. I strive in giving the Divine Message to remember that it must be given with a human touch, and therefore do not discard the element of humour, while striving, no matter what my topic is, to lead my audience to a further grasp of the greater possibilities of a life lived in Christ, which, after all, is the one hope for everyone.



Mr. Lloyd George's notes for his speech at the Anglo-American Press Dinner at Genoa in April last.

SIR EDWARD MARSHALL-HALL, K.C.

I have heard so few really great speeches that those which I did hear filled me with wonder and admiration. To know whether a speech is great it must be heard, as it is impossible to judge of it by reading even a verbatim report. So much depends on the delivery that I would venture to think that an average speech well delivered might approach nearer to greatness than a so-called great speech where the delivery was at fault. I am perfectly certain that I am incapable of making a great speech myself, and, therefore, how can I tell you how they are made? The chief essential, I should imagine, would be that the speech should be made from the heart and not from the lips, and made because the speaker had something which he felt he must say, and was not merely speaking for the sake of talking. Thirteen years' experience of the House of Commons taught me that the majority of the speeches there are delivered because the speaker wants to talk, wants to say something, and not because he feels that he has a real message to deliver. I do not believe that any great speech can be entirely memorized—it at once becomes a recital or a declamation. On the other hand, surely a great speech must be prepared, in that the heads of the subject must be worked up and some sort of order evolved, though the great art must

be to make it appear extempore. But, as I said before, how can I teach what I do not myself know, and when I remind you that in my thirteen years in Parliament I do not think I spoke half-a-dozen times in the House, you will believe me when I say that that was because I felt that I was not competent to make such speeches as alone ought to be delivered in that assembly. Alas, I can talk (a fatal fluency at times), but I have no pretensions to be a speaker, far less a great speaker. I always remember what one of my colleagues at the Bar said to me, after a long harangue which I had just finished: "A great effort, Marshall," and this is the highest praise I have ever deserved. I could tell you of some of my colleagues who would, no doubt, tell you how they make *their* great speeches, but then my idea of a great speech and theirs differs.

Mr. T. M. HEALY

(Governor-General of the Irish Free State).

I do not prepare speeches or refer to notes. I cannot. It is a great gift to be able to prepare, but I have not got it. Forty years ago I tried it, but could not recall a word I had written. I think Barry O'Brien's sketch of Parnell has a remark of Gladstone's on my speaking always without notes.

BISHOP WELLDON.

I am afraid I can hardly speak of myself as one who composes and delivers "great speeches." My speeches are generally sermons; and sermons differ from other speeches, as I will do my best to show. But if I am called at any time to make a speech of some considerable length, I begin by studying the whole topic upon which I shall speak—for I have learnt among the men of business in Manchester the importance of accuracy in regard to facts—then I set out the successive points of the subject in order. I consider how far and where it will be appropriate to introduce illustrations and perhaps humorous passages; and last of all, I carefully prepare, and sometimes actually write out, the sentences which I wish to impress with particular emphasis upon my audience, and especially the closing sentences or peroration of my speech. Apart from these sentences, I do not believe in committing speeches or, indeed, sermons to memory, for if the memory fails, as it may, even in the instance of a practised speaker, he is apt to be lost, having nothing to fall back upon.

Sermons which are delivered extempore are, I think, the most difficult of all speeches, partly because the preacher deals with subjects which cannot possess an air of novelty, and partly, but still more, because he is not exposed to any interruptions. Applause or dissent, even when it does not go beyond "Hear, hear," or "No, no," gives the speaker a little breathing time, in which he may collect his thoughts; dissent may even afford him a happy means of retorting upon his critics. I do not wish, of course, to go back to the old days, such as St. Chrysostom's, when sermons were commonly interrupted by expressions of assent or disapproval; I can only say that such expressions are often helpful to a speaker, and they are wanting to a preacher. I believe in writing out sermons; for a clergyman who has taken the trouble of writing out his sermon knows what he means to say and how long he will take in saying it; but I do not believe in learning the exact language of sermons by heart, even when they have been written out.

PROFESSOR SIR WILLIAM ASHLEY, Ph.D.

(Vice-Principal of Birmingham University).

I remember vividly the eager interest with which a large gathering of Harvard students, some five-and-twenty years ago, listened to Edward Everett Hale as he talked to them entertainingly on the art of public speaking. First, said he, get some ideas. Then write them out briefly. Go over your speech two or three times in your mind, with these notes before you. Finally jot down, on a slip of paper, say six inches by two, one or two catchwords for each point you propose to make. Leave all other notes behind; carry the slip inconspicuously in your hand, and you will probably never have to look at it. A speech is much more effective if spoken without recourse to notes; but the cues in one's hand will give confidence. Don't try, said Hale, to commit your speech to memory; if you have thought enough about it beforehand, the words will come. And he ended by revealing the ten catchwords which would have helped him out that afternoon if he had got stuck in his half-hour speech, and so sent us away hilarious.

This, or something like this, is the plan I have myself tried to follow. But I must add that, after one has had a little practice, one sometimes speaks quite as effectively—which isn't saying much!—when there has been no warning before the dinner or the meeting, and one has had to scribble one's cues on the menu or on the back of a resolution. The main thing is to have an idea or two; and, preferably, ideas that are likely to be new to your audience.

Dr. MACNAMARA.

It is the duty of the public speaker to put his best into his speech; he owes that to those who come to hear him. Therefore, unless I am called upon unexpectedly to make a speech, I spend all the time possible in the preparation of what I say. This, in a way to state deed, is the only concisely, and the facts clearly, Whenever I see completely. down notes on a man jotting envelope while the back of an the meeting is in progress, I know that we are probably in for a rambling, confused, and ragged performance.

DR. MACNAMARA.

First of all, I write out the speech fully; then I amend the phraseology until I am satisfied with it. I then mark it off into phrases or sentences, and these are either reproduced in heavy, large round hand or typed on stiff quarto sheets, a line right across the paper between each. When the quarto sheets are complete, I spend some time underlining *key words* with red and blue lead, and getting the contents of each page definitely in my mind. Each sheet represents about two or three minutes of speaking time.

At the meeting the quarto sheets are frankly put on the table before me, and as I speak I keep my eye pretty closely on them. If I have studied them enough beforehand, a glance at the page recalls to me fairly accurately the whole of its contents. I do not hold notes in my hand; that is inconvenient. Some people, apparently, seem rather ashamed at having to use notes, and curl them up into the smallest compass, keep them in the hand or behind the back, and surreptitiously bring them to the front for reference from time to time. I have always thought that an absurd plan.

If I am speaking in the open, or where it is necessary to hold the notes in the hand, I use stiff note-paper size instead of quarto.

As to length, a set public speech should last from thirty to forty-five minutes; if it lasts longer, it will have to be of special interest not to bore.

As to delivery, the speaker should get right away from the conversational tone, and should hold up his head and speak out slowly and clearly, taking care not to slur the most insignificant word. He should "join his flats," as actors used to say. He should have but three or four points to enforce and should take care to enforce them. If he is not satisfied that he has "got home" with any point, he should put it again with greater deliberation and emphasis. In a word, he should always remember that he is delivering a message which he wants his audience to take away with them.

Humour—a grateful relief in a serious speech—must be spontaneous and natural. If the situation can be aided by a perfectly relevant humorous story, let it be told by all means. But if the speaker drags in an entirely irrelevant and inconsequential anecdote, with the manifestly absurd justification "That reminds me of," it is utterly inartistic. If the anecdote is relevant and illuminates the point, no speaker need discard it because it is old. If there are any stories that date from Noak's Ark, you may be sure that a considerable portion of the audience will not have heard them before. If, however, you have not been present at the whole of the meeting, beware lest some previous speaker has not already told your story before you came! If this has happened, the laugh is at you and not with you.

PRESIDENT HARDING.

The American President's secretary writes:

"As a rule, the President in the preparation of an address does his writing in rather a short time, after he has given thought and study to his subject. His commonest method is to write on a pad which he holds on his knee. He invariably does this kind of work with a lead pencil, and is a very rapid producer.

"After his first draft is finished, he has it typed and then revises it. The revision finished, the address is either typed or printed on small sheets, and these he holds in his hand during the delivery,

PRESIDENT HARDING.

confining himself quite closely to the precise wording.

"I should perhaps explain that this rather meticulous care is not ordinarily a part of the President's method. Before he was President, he hardly ever spoke from manuscript or notes, but delivered his addresses impromptu, though, of course, after a good deal of consideration of his line of discourse.

"Like most other public men whose responsibilities make it necessary for them to be very literal in following a prepared manuscript, the President has acquired the habit of almost memorizing an address by reading it over once or twice after its original composition. For this reason, in speaking he does not give the appearance of being particularly dependent on the manuscript in his hand."

Mr. J. R. CLYNES.

My method is to acquire such information as I can on the subject, and especially information likely to be sought by those who may take an opposite point of view on a controversial question. Knowledge upon any topic is the first and best weapon of a speaker. Delivery or oratorical powers and language are of outstanding importance, but facts are the most potent weapon.

I do not attempt to memorize, except to get clearly in mind the essentials of material covering figures or facts. Having got facts in their proper place, I put upon paper just headings and brief notes of guidance.

I rely upon language after rising to speak. On occasion when a pronouncement is important, or a statement of a representative character or of national importance has to

be made, I usually commit it to writing. This method I also follow in more lengthy manner when delivering any important lecture on a set subject which has had to be explored.

THE REV. R. F. HORTON, M.A., D.D.

Speaking in a general way, I have a method of preparing and delivering speeches; but the odd thing is that my best utterances are often extemporaneous. It is, however, probably true that the only way to speak well on occasion extempore is to be constantly preparing speeches with care and labour. My own danger is to prepare too much and to become laboured. I have had to give up writing out and delivering my speech from MS. for that reason. To retain freshness and spontaneity is the great object, and yet the matter must be there. My method, therefore, has been now for many years to get the structure of the speech clear and articulated, its argument developed from the proem to the peroration, with a logical process looking always to the end. This structural framework I set down on paper. Then, if I have time, I work on it by writing out important sentences, quotations, illustrations, etc. These notes dwell in my mind for days, sometimes even for weeks. They undergo alterations, additions, and subtractions, until perhaps before the delivery of the speech they have become useless for anyone except myself, in whom the organic development has been going on. Then, if it is possible, I secure an hour of thought before actually speaking. With the notes in hand I go through the argument two or three times, trying to imagine that I am actually addressing the audience. Sentences or phrases I commit to memory, but my primary thought is to get the whole consecutive movement of the speech into my mind, so that it comes spontaneously when I begin to speak. I usually have the notes in my hand; but the speech is best when I have become completely independent of them, and am able to follow my scheme of thought, and to give my quotations and illustrations entirely from memory. People often think I speak easily; that may be so, but it is at the cost of hard labour.

LIEUT.-GENERAL SIR ROBERT BADEN-POWELL.

My method of preparing a speech is very simple, but whether it is effective is for others to say.

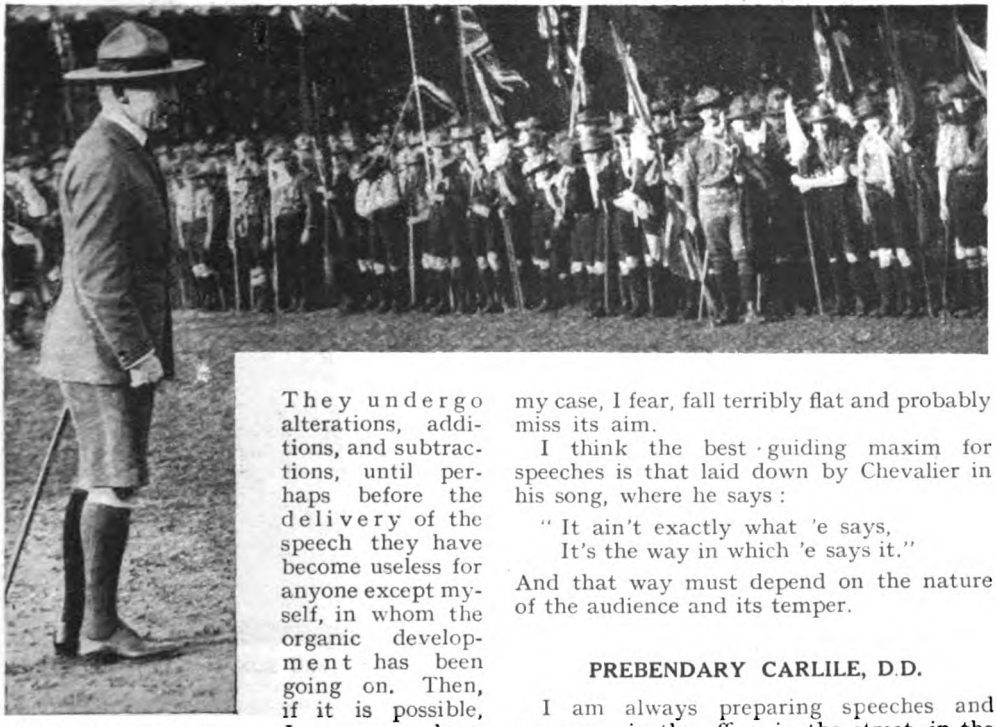
I merely think beforehand of one special point which I desire that my audience should carry away with them—and that is all there is to it. In what form I put it depends entirely upon the kind of audience and the humour in which I find them when I am called upon to speak

A speech prepared beforehand would in my case, I fear, fall terribly flat and probably miss its aim.

I think the best guiding maxim for speeches is that laid down by Chevalier in his song, where he says:

"It ain't exactly what 'e says,
It's the way in which 'e says it."

And that way must depend on the nature of the audience and its temper.



SIR R. BADEN-POWELL.

PREBENDARY CARLILE, D.D.

I am always preparing speeches and sermons—in the office, in the street, in the

train, because I have always made a strong point of drawing from life; I therefore constantly write down the smallest details, touches of nature, pathos, or humour.

The life-story of an individual, if told in the right way, will focus attention. The story of Edith Cavell, for example, will grip attention more quickly and effectively than any amount of abstract eloquence on the bare theme of self-sacrifice and heroism.

As ninety-nine per cent. of my addresses are for the Church Army, I believe that I have a better chance of converting the modern Bill Sikes if I tell him how another Bill Sikes has climbed the upward path; I feel that I have a better chance of securing a cheque for a hundred pounds out of a richer audience if I tell them some sharp, true story illustrating the work of a class of homes, rather than if I describe the homes themselves.

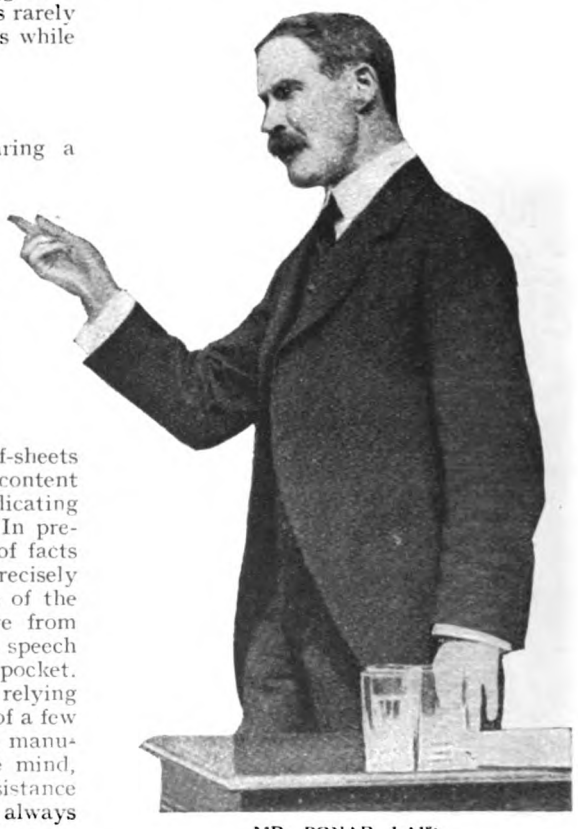
So far as notes for speeches are concerned, I re-write the three or four headings out several times and thus memorize them. Under such headings I place one suggestive word which would put me right if, as rarely happens, I have to refer to the notes while speaking.

LORD RIDDELL.

With me, the method of preparing a speech depends upon its nature. In preparing for an ordinary after-dinner speech I try to have a few good cues, which I can take up and develop while speaking. These I write down on the back of the menu. For more serious efforts I think out the points I want to make and the order in which they should be made, then collect any necessary facts and dictate the heads of the speech, which are typewritten in capitals on half-sheets of note-paper; or sometimes I content myself with half-a-dozen pointers indicating the broad heads to be dealt with. In preparing lectures involving a number of facts and figures which have to be precisely stated, I write or dictate the whole of the lecture, which I either read or give from notes, but find it difficult to deliver a speech of which I have the manuscript in my pocket. I get much better results from relying entirely on my memory with the aid of a few notes. The mere fact of having the manuscript at hand seems to cripple the mind, which continually craves the assistance of the written word. Quotations I always have typed out.

Mr. BONAR LAW.

Mr. Bonar Law's secretary writes: "Ever since Mr. Bonar Law began to take an interest in politics, over twenty years ago, he has never used notes either in the preparation of his speeches or in their delivery. For more than ten years after he became a member of Parliament all his speeches, even those delivered in the House of Commons, were prepared verbally in his mind beforehand without any part of them being put on paper. In consequence of making speeches in this way he was always supposed to have an extraordinary memory, but Mr. Bonar Law denied that and said it was simply a question of concentration in preparation. After he became Leader of the Conservative Party it was not, of course, possible for him to prepare speeches in this way, and for a number of years now the only preparation he makes for any speech is to think out the lines on which it will be delivered, without making any attempt at verbal preparation."



MR. BONAR LAW.

The Garden of God

A SEQUEL TO "THE BLUE LAGOON"

By

H. de VERE STACPOOLE

ILLUSTRATED BY W. HATHERELL, R.I.

BOOK II. *(continued)*

XVIII.

NEXT day and for days after, Katafa, drawing apart from Dick, would sit brooding, watchful, waiting, but wherever she might be, by the wood edge or lagoon bank, if Dick were in sight, her face would be turned towards him, her eyes stealthily watching him.

She had forgotten Karolin. There was only one thing in the world now that mattered to her—Dick.

Since the night when he had cried to her in his sleep for help, everything else had ceased to matter and her light-thinking mind had become the wrestling ground of two opposing forces.

The impulse to destroy Dick came at times in great waves up from the darkest recesses of her mind, like the rollers from the storm that had destroyed the *Raratonga*. Yet the impulse always just failed of effect. The terrible desire to destroy, and destroy with her own hand, had less relationship to hatred than to irritation. Dick vexed her soul, or the something dark that lay in her soul, and time and again she would almost stretch out her hand towards the fish spear or the knife that, once clasped, would have been driven into his heart.

Taminan cried to her, "Seize it and destroy him," and then the voice of Taminan would turn into the voice of Dick. "Hai, amanoi, Katafa—help!" and her hand would lose its power.

One day when Dick was off hunting for turtle on the reef the crisis came and the evil thing in her heart triumphed.

The fear of Nanawa and danger to herself vanished, and, rising up from where she had been sitting beside the house, she put fresh fuel on the cooking fire they had used for the mid-day meal, and which had not been put out.

Then, swift as Atalanta, she crossed the sward, dived amongst the leaves, and, fetching the skull from where she had hidden it, close to her shack, returned with it, placed it on the ground before the fire, and, piling on more fuel, stood like a beautiful priestess, her eyes on the skull and her lips moving, repeating the old formula: "Come now, Nanawa, powerful to kill or save, come now and fulfil the wish of my heart—the wish of my heart—the wish of my heart."

The formula ran from her lips, a string of meaningless words; the something that had checked her hand was checking now her thinking power. She could not put into thought the wish to destroy, just as yesterday she could not put the will into action. Nanawa, that figment of a Kanaka's imagination, was powerless against a real god more terrible and cruel than any deity of man's imagination. A god that held Katafa now in his grip.

She put the fire out and hid the skull in the leaves. Then, casting herself down in the shadow of the trees, she lay balked, demagnetized, impotent, looking at the lagoon water, the far-off reef, and the sky beyond.

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Above the house two birds were building, two blue parua birds, exquisite in colour and form, fearless of man, and making their house again in the same position they had chosen for numberless years. These birds, long-lived as parrots, had seen the father and mother of Dick build, mate, bring forth their young and depart; they had seen the arrival of Lestrange, the growth of Dick, the coming of Katafa. They had seen Lestrange waiting for his lost children, they had seen him vanish, and now they had seen his skull laid on a strange altar. Verily they had seen strange things, but the strangest lay below them on the sward in the tree shadows of that slumberous afternoon, for Katafa might have been Emmeline, who had often lain there just like that—Emmeline with the faithful flower still in her hair and her dark eyes fixed across the lagoon on the mysterious sea beyond.

The birds, whilst friendly, had always held aloof, the noisy and restless Dick managing to break somehow that thread of confidence which had drawn them sometimes to swoop down and light on Emmeline's shoulder or hand.

Now, Dick away and Katafa lying absolutely motionless, one of the birds, stirred, maybe, by some old memory, fluttered down on the sward close to her, looked at her with bright eyes, picked up a bit of dried grass, and flew up with it to the nest. Again it came down, and, the girl stretching out her hand to it, it lit on her thumb, hopping at once back to the ground. She put her hand on its blue, warm back, clasping it for a moment. It was the first warm-blooded living thing she had ever touched. The first thing she had handled without intent to kill, the first thing that had come to waken the warmth of humanity in her heart—except that cry of Dick: "Hai, amanoi, Katafa—help!"

XIX.

WE see in Nature forms of which perhaps the highest images of men are only compound reflections and symbols. If there had never been birds, would men ever have imagined angels? If there had never been serpents, would men ever have imagined Satan? Are the things about us—which we grossly believe to be the properties of a vast stage set for man to strut on—are these things the real actors in a drama of which man is only a property? A mirror exceedingly complex, built and set up by them for their reflections to fall on? Subtract from man all that he has ever seen, touched, smelt, heard, or tasted, and what is left? Bar the road of any of these five senses, will he be complete?

Katafa, who had never touched a warm-blooded sentient thing till now, released the bird and it flew up to the branch where the nest was building, but it had left with her something that had become part of her for ever. Something strange and new and sweet yet disturbing, something from the universal soul of sentient things that had reached her vaguely perhaps in the cry for help, but more fully now.

A great longing came on her to clasp the bird again, but it was far from her reach, busy in the branches above. She sat up and, with her hands folded in her lap, gazed away out to sea, perplexed, troubled, listening to the sound of the surf on the reef, the movements of the birds above, and the gentle stirring of the wind in the leaves.

All the tenderest voices of the Garden of God, all the voices that had brought comfort to Lestrange and promise to his tired heart, seemed conspiring now to augment the message of the bird, the message from a world of compassion, tenderness, and pity.

A clap of thunder shattered the silence of the cloudless day and roused the echoes of the woods; another and another, swiftly following like drum strokes on some Gargantuan drum.

Katafa sprang to her feet.

The mirror-still water of the lagoon was broken and boiling with fish, fish driven and in flight, great bream tossing themselves into the air, palu driving like swords through the water, schnapper, garfish, all as if pursued by some enclosing net, whilst louder now came the thunder and turmoil of a battle that was drawing closer, a battle between Titans of the sea.

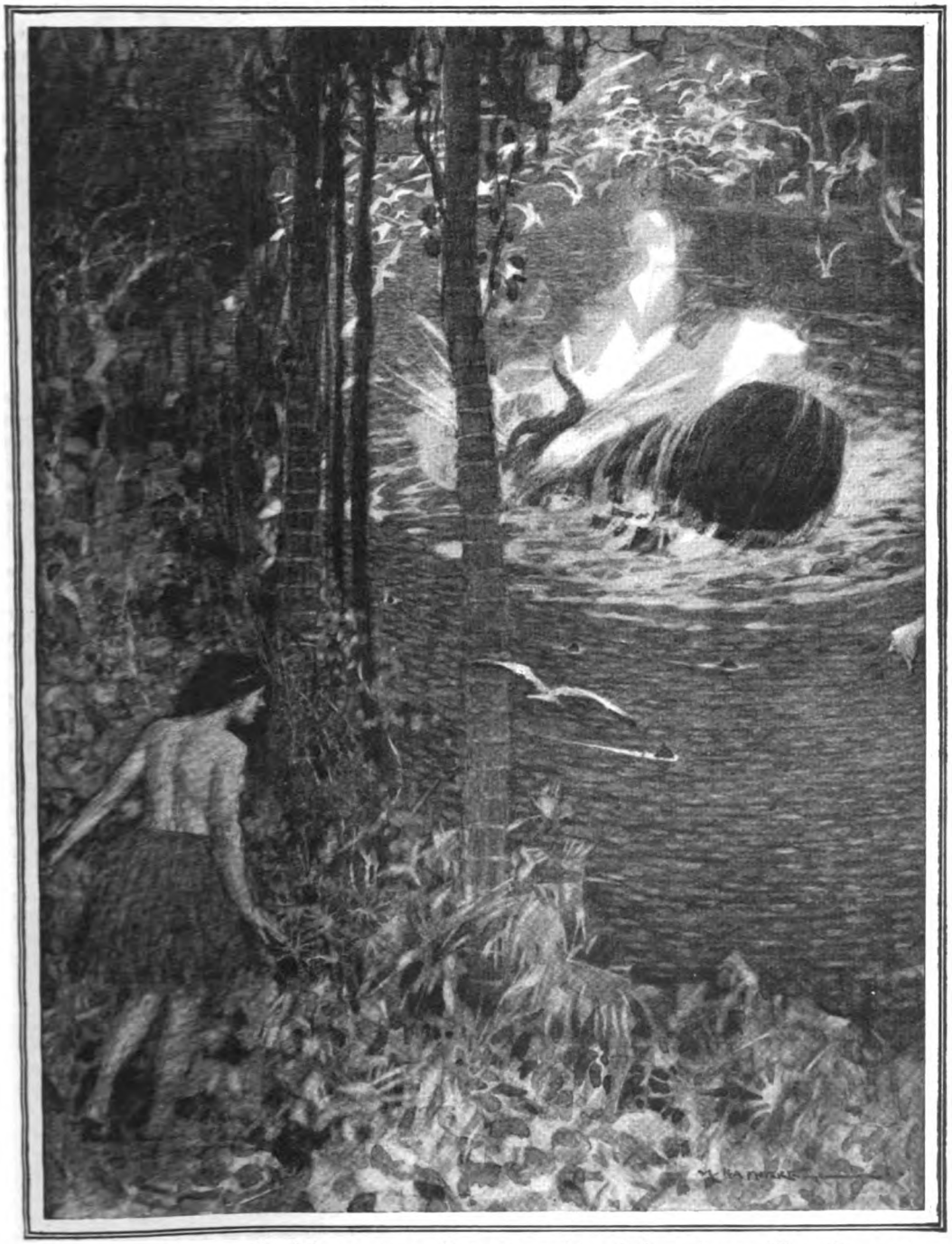
A bull cachalot, cruising alone and exploring the great depths to southward of the island for octopods, had fallen in with four bandits. The first was a Japanese swordfish, a ferocious samurai of the sea who had come on the Kiro Shiwo current from Japan to Alaska and from Alaska down the Pacific coast, past Central America, then skirting Humboldt's current, striking west for the Gambiers, and up past Karolin to its fate.

Close on to Palm Tree, sighting the cachalot a dusky bloom in the green ahead, it reversed its gear and then charged. Swift as a dagger stroke the appalling sword got home and stuck like a nail in a barn door.

Now that sword, driven by energy to be calculated in foot tons, would have passed through the planking of a ship as easily as a knife through cheese and have been withdrawn as easily; for twenty years it had ripped and slain living creatures from Hondo to Ducie, but never before had it stuck.

Embedded to the hilt under the backbone of the whale, the sword resisted all the efforts of the tail and great sail-like fins of the swordsman, the cachalot shearing through the water, terrified less by the pain of the blow than the fact that its steering gear was upset by the frantic evolutions of the fins and tail of its assailant.

Then tearing through the sea came the orcas, three of them, from miles away. They did the steering. Like bulldogs clinging to



Up the lagoon the fighters came, driving everything before them. Then the great **sight broke** before the eyes of Katafa, while above, a blanket of wheeling screaming gulls followed the battle.

the head of the leviathan, they piloted it into the lagoon, the cachalot springing into the air and falling back in foam and thunder. Up the left arm of the lagoon the fighters came, driving everything before them, palu, garfish, bream, turtle, rays. and eels all rushing to escape, the orcas like tigers to left and right and ahead, sharks and giant dog-fish following after tearing at the swordfish, whose fins were in ribbons and whose tail was gone.

Then the great sight broke before the eyes of Katafa, the monstrous bulk of the cachalot rounding the cape and the water leaping in waves over the bank as it drove into the pool. Above, a blanket of wheeling screaming gulls followed the battle, whilst from far at sea the great burgomasters and bo'suns were coming in swift, wide of wing and all converging to one point—the cachalot.

She heard a shout. It was Dick, who had just come back from the woods. He was running down to the lagoon bank, wild with excitement and not regarding her in the least as he stood watching whilst the orcas, steadfast as death, clinging to left and right, hung, thrashing, till the great barn-door mouth of the cachalot opened at last and, swift as ferrets, they began to root and tear out the tongue.

Then, suddenly, the body of the cachalot bent, and with the snap of a released spring it turned, dashing the spray tree high, and drove back down the lagoon with the rush of a torpedo-boat, sharks and dog-fish following after, to be lost beyond the cape.

Dick, shouting like a maniac, followed through the trees to see the end. Katafa, gazing with wide-pupilled eyes at the blood-stained waters of the pool, shivered.

She had seen orcas hunting and destroying a cachalot from the outer beach of Karolin and the sight had left her without emotion, but the mind of Katafa had changed and the world around her had found voices telling her of things unguessed and undreamed of till now.

The great fight had brought matters to a head with her, coupling itself in some extraordinary way, by antithesis, with the warm tenderness revealed by the birds, and with Dick, who had just vanished heedless of her.

What the blue birds had whispered the battle had suddenly shouted: "You stand alone. A world lies around you of which you know nothing. It belongs to Taori, never shall you enter it."

She looked up at the birds, happy and building, heedless of the terror that had just passed and vanished. She looked at the pool, still murky, its surface spangled with prismatic colours where streaks of oil had spread; she looked at the far-off reef and the sea beyond, and she saw nothing but Taori, that beautiful lithe form, that face, fearless and ever seeming to look upwards, those eyes full of sight for all things but her. Until now she had never really seen him. She heard again his voice calling on her for help.

Like a person wandering in sleep, she passed along the lagoon bank towards the eastern trees, seeing nothing, moving by instinct, scarcely alive, terribly, suddenly, and mortally stricken. Sounds filled her ears like the chiming of the reef coral when the breakers of the high tide were coming in, sounds now broken and diffuse, now calling his name, gull-clear: "Taori! Taori! Taori!"

Then, breaking away from the dream state and turning to a great tree, she cast her arms about it, embracing it like a living thing and resting her cheek against its smooth, sun-warmed bark—clinging to it and the great momentary peace that had come to her tormented heart.

XX.

DICK, who had heard the first thunder of the battle in the woods, running from the trees had seen Katafa standing watching the cachalot come into the pool, but he had no eyes for her; the excitement of the fight and the fear of injury to the dinghy moored by the bank held him from thought of anything else.

Then, when the cachalot broke away, he followed, running through the trees, hallooing, mad with excitement and the desire to be in at the death. He could see through the branches overhanging the water the foam in the wake of the fight and a long line of following gulls.

Dick, knocking himself against trees and tripping on the undergrowth, followed till he reached the banana beach opposite the bank. Here, where he had slain Sru, son of Laminai, whose body the tides and gulls and sharks had long dispersed, he stood to watch whilst the cachalot, practically dead, moved in a great ring on the water, a ring described beneath a vortex of birds.

Then, as Dick watched, little by little the dying cachalot gained speed; rising on the water as the momentum increased the great bulk showed clear, moving in the circle that Nature has prescribed for all creatures dazed or confused.

As the speed increased, the sharks held off for a moment, dozens of dark fins breaking the surface of the water; the gulls, ceasing their clamour, circled like a coil of smoke, and silence fell on the lagoon, broken only by the rush of the fish and the murmur of the reef tinged with the first fires of sunset.

Dick watched without moving till the flurry passed, the great bulk, like a ship turned turtle, moving ever more slowly whilst the shark fins vanished and a gull lit on it as the gull had lit on the chest of Sru.

When he returned to the house, Katafa was nowhere in sight. He did not trouble about her—his mind was too full of the things he had seen. He ate his supper and turned in, but he

could not sleep. Katafa, supperless in her shack, gazing with wide-open eyes at the starlight seen through the leaves, could not sleep; she had seen him come back, cook his food, and vanish into the house. He had never called for her, as he usually did were she absent at mealtime; he never had called for her unless he wanted her for something, to help in the cooking, to carry his spears, to work the boat. She was less to him than the fish he had just eaten or the mat he was lying on.

It was only now that she recognized this. Steadily, bit by bit, strand by strand, the clutch of Taminan on her conscious mind had been broken so that her heart could beat as the human heart beats and her eyes could show her heart what it desired. Powerful as ever in her subconscious self, the spell remained, capable of separating her for ever from the touch of human being; but her conscious mind had found release, an object to grasp with all the pent-up passion of her nature—and its indifference to her.

XXI.

NEXT morning Dick, who had spent the night hunting cachalots in dreamland, came out to find Katafa lighting the fire for breakfast. She seemed just the same as ever, save for the fact that she had no flower in her hair, but a third person, had one been present, would have noticed that her eyes evaded him, that she ate scarcely anything, and sat mum-chance as though some bitter quarrel had arisen between them.

Dick noticed nothing of all this; he did not even help to clear away and tidy the place; he was off to see if there was anything left of the cachalot; and as he picked up a spear and made away towards the opposite trees, he shouted some words or directions to her which she did not reply to. She seemed deaf as well as dumb, and when he was gone, instead of clearing away the remains of the food and putting out the fire, she turned on her side and lay with eyes half closed, scarcely breathing, seemingly asleep. Her half-closed eyes were fixed on the point where Dick had vanished among the trees. Dick, who, without a thought of her, was making his way through the woods, now skirting the water side, now plunging through the growths of mammee apple and fern.

When he reached the beach, all traces of the cachalot were gone. Not a sign remained of the great fight of yesterday. The gulls were fishing just as of old and the lagoon lay placid and untroubled, blue and breezed and happy to where the reef line whispered its eternal message to the shore.

He saw Nan on his post away to the south. He remembered the "big fish," and a sudden respect for Nan and his power—perhaps the first dawn of a religious feeling—came into his mind. Nan had brought the cachalot into the lagoon as well as the big bream and schnapper, and as he stood by the creaming ripples on the sand he gave a nod of his head in the direction of the gollywog as if in recognition.

Then he came plunging back through the trees. Nan had suddenly reminded him of the sapling he had cut for his elevation, and the sapling of the mast he had made for the dinghy.

He must get busy on that mast and sail, he had neglected them for days, and, full of the fury of the newly-released idea, he came bursting out of the wood across the sward, making for the house and shack where the sail was stowed. He would be able to sail the dinghy out beyond the reef and hunt for bigger things. Unhappy Dick, he did not know of the bigger thing that was feeling for him to grip him, of the hunting awaiting him on that day.

Full of this idea, heedless of earth, sea, sky, or Katafa, he came running across the sward. The girl saw him coming and half rose, sitting on her heels, a lovely picture in the tree shadows; a picture that might have driven an artist to despair or drawn an anchorite from his cell, a picture only to be matched by that of Dick as he ran, sunny-haired and light of foot and swift as the wind.

One might have fancied him running towards her and have pictured the embrace of these two most lovely of God's creatures, but he passed her as though she were a tree stump, vanished behind the house, and reappeared in a minute dragging after him the ugly old mat sail. Casting it on the ground, he made for the dinghy, seized the mast which he had left lying in it, and came back with it on his shoulder—still running.

That was just like him. He would leave a thing undone for days, maybe for weeks, and then, of a sudden, start on to it forgetful of everything else.

There was some old rope and signal halyard line that Kearney had salved from the wreck—this had to be fetched; also some tools from the tool-box; he fetched them himself, and then, sitting down, happy and content, he set to work and found his work cut out for him. The sail was too big, it and the spar that carried it. With the sail and spar spread out on the ground, he crawled about it on his hands and knees, measuring it as against the mast. Sometimes he would say a few words to the girl, heedless whether she replied or not. Then, when he had been working some half-hour or so, looking up, he caught her eyes.

He was sitting with the sail spread on his knees and she was lying opposite to him, resting on her arm. She had looked in his face a thousand times before, straight as the sun looked at him or the lagoon, but now, just before her eyes could evade him, he caught their glance, caught the look on her face—something that vanished and became nothing before his mind could fully seize it.

Pausing in his work, he looked at her for a moment without speaking; she seemed to have forgotten his presence; her eyes cast down under their long lashes were following some pattern her finger was tracing on the ground and her face showed no expression.

He went on with his business mechanically. His mind, so far from straying, focused on the work in his hands. Every fibre of the mat that differed in colour from the others impressed itself on his sight and understanding, the stitches went in evenly spaced as though made by some unerring mechanism, Katafa might seemingly have been a thousand miles away, and yet every fibre of the sail, every stitch he put in, seemed part of the something strange that had suddenly come to him from Katafa.

He worked with head bent as if lost in thought; then, pausing in his work, he raised his head and looked at her, his lips pursed ever so slightly, the trace of a wrinkle on his forehead.

Dick grasped at her again, and missed. Then, as if driven by a wind, she ran; pursued yet untouched, she passed across the sward with the speed of Atalanta.

She heard the stitches cease. Slowly raising her face, her eyes met his fully, without flinching, steadfast, whilst with her eyes still clinging to his, her breast rose with a sigh that died to a shudder. He had dropped the needle from his hand and the sail from his knees; leaning forward with half-parted lips, his respiration ceased whilst her gaze fell away languorously like the gaze of a dying person, only to be raised again and plunged into his very soul.

They were standing now, the mat between them, Katafa flushed, shuddering, half laughing, as one might fancy a being new dead and on the

threshold of Paradise. Dick, his nostrils widespread, his pupils broad with new-born desire, flinging out his arm, tried to seize her, and grasped—nothing. She had evaded him as though some wind had blown her aside. The attempt to seize her had thrown her into the world we enter when we fall asleep.

XXII.

JUST as a person in some phases of the state we call the dream condition has to run or finds himself rooted to the spot, Katafa, under the imperious sway of Taminan, bent aside with no more volition than a reed possesses when moved by the wind. The very intensity of her longing and her passion cast her more completely into the grasp of the subconscious power that had her in its charge.

Dick, with a sharp cry as if someone had struck him, sprang across the mat, grasped at her again, and missed. She had bent, and, springing erect again, all her soul craving for the embrace, with arms outspread like a drowning person, she in turn tried to grasp him. Then, as if driven by a wind, turning, she ran as the dreamer runs; pursued yet untouched, she passed across the sward with the speed of Atalanta, the leaves divided before her, yet still she ran unharmed by bramble, unhurt by tree, seeing nothing, protected by instinct. Then, far in the woods where the tall matamatas tossed their broad green leaves to the wind, she crouched amidst the ferns like a hare in its form.

The great crisis had come and passed and Taminan had triumphed.

XXIII.

THERE was a girl of the islands, Nalia by name, who, living under the taboo of Taminan and pursued by a lover, found refuge in the sea. Swimming far out she could not return, for the place of refuge had in some way by association linked itself with the spell and she could not leave it. She was swept away and drowned. Katafa, crouching amidst the ferns, heard the wind in the matamata leaves, the flutter of birds, the murmur of the reef, muted by the woods. Then a voice faint and far away, the voice of Taori :—

" Katafa, hai, amanoi, Katafa."

She listened—nothing more. Nothing but the wind, the reef murmur, and the birds.

Time passed and the dusk rose, and then, as the starlight fell silvering the lagoon and the sea, she came gliding through the trees. Dividing the leaves, she looked and saw the sward and the house with the starlight upon it. There in the house, with the little ships above him, Taori was sleeping, far from her as any star. She could no more leave the protection of the trees than Nalia could have left the sea ; the open space repelled her as it might have repelled an agoraphobiac, only with infinitely greater power. She was bound to the woods for ever.

In the old romances we read of women spellbound by witches and black magic. Le Juan had used no black magic—working with no material but Katafa's self she had moulded into it a law that had become part of self. Passion could not fight with or break that law ; nothing could break it but something higher than self, something not yet fully existent in her still nebulous soul.

Like an animal held from its mate she crouched now, her eyes fixed on the house, the very depth of her passion forging her bonds more securely in so far as it destroyed reason. Dead to thought, her senses were yet acutely alive.

She heard with miraculous clearness the

thousand little noises of the night. Then, as the wind from the sea died to the faintest stirring of air, the moon rising across the eastern trees struck the house, and the air, as though some crystal door had been closed, grew still. Not a leaf moved. Katafa crouching amidst the leaves seemed part of the silence that had taken the world, a silence reaching from the farthest sea stars to the trees, a silence suddenly broken by a sound more terrible than the voice of any beast. Howling, bubbling, bellowing, echoing through the trees, it came from the distant eastern beach, raising the birds in screaming flocks, waking roosting gulls on the reef.

She knew that sound. It was the blowing of a Lambai shell, the great conch shell of Karolin, blown only for war.

"We have come!" cried the shell; "the long canoes have come from the south, from the south, from the south! Kara! Kara! Kara! War! War! War!"

XXIV.

WHEN the squall took Katafa's canoe that night, sweeping Taiofa overboard, he was not drowned, but the sea killed him all the same. The canoe, driving north free of its anchor rope and towed by the fish, left him far behind, and without a moment's hesitation he struck due west, swimming for his life. He was making for the water to leeward of the atoll, where the current would be broken in its force. Here he landed after hours of swimming and with his left leg gone below the knee. The sea is full of hungry mouths, and to leeward of Karolin that night there were many sharks. He had just time to reach his people and tell his story before he died.

A great wind had struck the canoe and capsized it. He and Katafa had been thrown into the water. A shark had taken her. He had struck out for the reef. That was the story he told, and he had told it in all good faith. He had seen Katafa pulled to pieces by sharks, though how he had seen it Heaven and the Kanaka imagination alone could tell.

When Dick struck Sru dead on the beach, Talia, Manua, and Leopa paddling off across the lagoon had with equal imagination seen the island alive with Dicks, potential Dicks stirring amidst the trees. The canoe-men had yelled their war cry, and, once clear of the lagoon, the potential Dicks became real figures thronging the beaches of their imaginations.

Nan's head woggling on its stick became the size of a house, full of speech and proclaiming to high heaven that his deityship had taken up forced residence on Palm Tree, that his power and protection had been filched from Karolin, the fecundity of whose women, coco-nut trees, and puraka plants would be now a thing of the past.

Beyond the reef and heading south the wind changed, blowing gently at first and then steadily and strongly from the north, a favourable wind and a good omen. The paddles dashed the water to spray and the great sail bellied to the breeze. All night long they paddled till, suddenly, in the east, like a dropped rose leaf, came the dawn. Away ahead lay Karolin, and the paddle-men, who had taken a spell of rest, leaving all the work to the wind, resumed their paddles.

As they came through the reef opening the sands began to swarm, for eager eyes had reported that they had lost a man, and that of the four who had started three only were returning.

Now this canoe was of no importance except for the fact that Sru, the son of the king's son, was on board of it. It flew no signal of disaster, yet instantly the news was known by this little nation of fishers and hunters of the sea, to whom sight was life and swift deduction bread. Before beaching, it was known that Sru was the missing man, and Laminai himself was standing to meet them as the keel took the sand.

It was Laminai who had tried to dash Katafa to death on board the Spanish ship, it was Laminai who had killed her mother with the blow of a coral-headed club. Better for him and his sons had he killed the child as well, for Taiofa had gone with her to his death and Sru would never have fallen but for the image of Nan which she had erected to bring the big fish to the lagoon.

Talia, Manua, and Leopa, when they saw Laminai standing there with his shark-tooth necklace on his breast, were hit of a sudden by the forgotten fact that this terrible man would most likely visit on them the death of Sru. Visions of being staked out on the reef for sharks to devour drove them half-crazy with fright, but not crazy enough to forget Nan as a stand-by.

"Nan! Nan! Nan!" they yelled as the keel drove ashore. "He has been taken from us by a new people who have slain thy son, O Laminai. For half a day we fought with them, but Sru was slain and Nan stands on the reef of Marua (Palm Tree), and never will our crops flourish again."

This news, delivered so convincingly, hit the whole beach dumb. Laminai, at a stroke, seemed to have forgotten Sru, the people automatically drew back, making a semi-circle, and in this arena the three survivors of the great fight stood facing Laminai and his last son Ma, a youth of some nineteen years. He questioned them with a word or two, and then, turning, led the way to the great house of the village, where, in the shadow of the door, Uta Matu was lying on a mat with his back to the day.

Uta was an old man now, very different from the man who years ago had led the attack on the

Spanish ship. He was so fat and indolent that he had to be turned by his women like a feather bed, and there he lay puffing out his cheeks whilst the three canoe-men stood before him and one told their tale of the ravishing of Nan, the great fight, and the death of Sru.

Having heard them out, Uta did an astonishing thing—he sat up.

This old gentleman, despite his fat, his indolence, the blood lust that still clung to him amidst the other lusts, and the fact that his only dress was a Gee string, was a statesman of a sort. It was quite easy to call for revenge, to set the village buzzing like a beehive, sharpening spears and rolling the long canoes out of the canoe-houses, yet when the murmur that marked the conclusion of the canoe-men's story began to swell and spread and threatened to break into a roar, Uta Matu raised his hand and cut it off as one cuts off water at the main.

He had to do two things—consult the priestess of Nanawa to see if the war gods were propitious, and consult Ma, admiral-in-chief and dockyard superintendent of the Karolin navy. Being what he was, Uta decided not to worry the gods till he was sure of the navy. He called Ma, and the son of Laminai came and stood before his grandfather and king.

The fleet was ready. That was the report of Ma. The four great canoes, each capable of holding thirty men, were safe in the canoe-houses, seaworthy and only recently caulked, the paddles were in their places, and the masts and mat sails in readiness.

Now these canoes were useless for fishing, or at least never used; they were too large and cumbersome and were kept for war. They had been used for the attack on the Spanish ship and they had been used when the present northern ruling tribe of Karolin had fought the southern tribe living across the lagoon, nearly exterminating it, and chasing the remnants to the beach of Palm Tree.*

Karolin was a sea power ever ready for eventualities.

Having received the report, Uta, to confirm it, caused himself to be carried to the canoe-houses; not content with hearing, he must see. Having seen that all was right, he was carried back to the door of his palace, but the order for war did not come yet. Le Juan had to be consulted.

"Call Le Juan," commanded Uta.

XXV.

LE JUAN had seen the canoe-men land and heard their story. She had been on the outskirts of the crowd, and, having got the gist of the matter, retired to her hut waiting for the call she knew would come. Whether Nanawa was a false god or not, she believed in him just as she believed in Nan.

Never laugh at the gods nor sneer at them—the form of history has been moulded by them and man's destiny arranged by them, and the meanest African idol is the emblem of something that, if not real, was at all events powerful.

An interesting thing about these gods of Karolin was their individuality; each was a distinct character. Nan mild and benevolent, Nanawa ferocious, capricious, and always ready to strike. Nan would never have been willing or able to reduce Le Juan to the condition in which she appeared before Uta when they found her and led her to him. Naturally ugly, her face was now appalling, rigid as a face carved from stone, and with only the whites of the eyes showing.

Standing before Uta and supported on either side, she remained dumb for a moment, then her mouth opened and a voice issued from it. The words flowed over out of it, almost adhering together, the very saliva of speech.

"Set forth, strike, destroy!" commanded the voice. "Destroy utterly, O Uta, and thou, Laminai his son, and thou, Ma the son of Laminai!" The words became thicker, lost meaning, became a shout, a prolonged bray, more terrific than the bellowing of a conch. Convulsions seized her, foam ran from her mouth, and then, collapsing, she was carried off, whilst Ma seized the great Lambai shell passed to him out of the king's house by one of the wives, and filled the air with its howling.

The bellowing of the shell echoing over beach and lagoon roused the gulls; their cries came back like the echoes of the cries of the people. Kara! Kara! Kara! War! War! War! Then silence fell and the fighting men, the women, and the very children set to work, marshalled by Laminai, on the great business that had suddenly entered their lives like a sword.

It was still early morning. At that moment the cachalot was passing Karolin to find the swordfish, the orcas, and destruction! But it was not till early morning of the next day that the preparations were complete and the four great canoes ready for launching. Each canoe held thirty men—one hundred and twenty men all told—and every man of the tribe was of that expedition except Uta, who was long past war, and three old men, dwellers on the southern beach, useless for anything but fishing in a small way. In two hours after launching, such was the readiness of response of Karolin to danger or aggression, the provisions were on board, and in another hour the fleet, led by the canoe of Laminai, was paddling towards the break.

XXVI.

THE wind had changed and was blowing now dead from the south, and as they passed the break the mat sails went up and the four great canoes shot away to the north, urged by wind, current, and paddles, like hawks released on their prey.

* See "The Blue Lagoon."

An hour after the start the wind failed them, but still the paddles kept on.

Then before sunset the men ceased work for a moment to shout and wave their paddles at Palm Tree, far off still but clearly to be seen on the northern horizon.

Half an hour later the landward flying gulls began to take the light of sunset on their wings and the sun to dip towards a sea blazing with light, and now, as the sun vanished and the dusk brimmed over from the east, a wind rose blowing towards the land and the paddle-men at the command of Laminai ceased work.

The moon would not rise yet, but the stars gave them light—light enough to see, as they closed with the land, the breakers on the outer beach and the head of Nan on its post. Keeping away to the east, they sought the reef opening where the palm tree stood bowed like a sentinel fallen asleep, and as it came in view, Laminai giving an order, the sails were taken in and the paddles flashed into work.

At that moment the brow of the moon broke the sea.

The tide was just at the slack after full, and on the long river of light from the moon the canoes came like dark drifting leaves; past the break, the paddles working with scarcely a sound, across the lagoon, moving ever more slowly till again came an order from Laminai and, the stone anchors going over without a splash, the fleet rode at its moorings, silent as the moon that now stood above the reef.

They were brave with a courage that nothing could destroy but defeat or superstition, that nothing could dent but the unknown.

Had they been attacking a known tribe they would have beached the canoes, shouting defiance; as it was they anchored, feeling their courage and their shark-tooth spears, listening, looking, whilst the moon rose higher, lighting more fully the fairy land they were about to attack, whose only defenders were a youth fast asleep and a girl the prisoner of illusion, and the trees.

Then, of a sudden, the lagoon became dotted with heads—the whole army of Karolin had disembarked. Swimming like otters they made for the shore and, leaving the canoes with a man apiece for anchor watch, formed on the beach.

Nothing but their long shadows drawn on the salt white beach by the moon opposed them, shadows that swung clubs and brandished spears, threatening who knows what in shadow-land.

The silent woods stood firm, the reef beyond the lagoon sent the self-same whisper, the wind lifting the foliage failed and died. Nature before the terrific threat of Karolin seemed to have fallen asleep, till Ma, like the knight before the enchanted castle, seizing the great conch, blew the signal for war, blew with one mighty and prolonged breath till the whorls of the conch nearly split asunder, till the howling, bubbling echoes came back from strand and hill-top and wood and sea.

Like the response of the shadows came the response of the echoes—nothing more.

XXVII.

DICK, when sleep took him that night, passed straight into dreamland. He rarely dreamed. When he did, his dreams had always one origin, some vexation or irritation experienced during the day—he would be trying to light a fire that would not light, or the dinghy would be sinking under him, or going to cut bananas the banana trees would be gone; those were the sort of dreams that came to Dick. Katafa had never entered them till to-night, when, suddenly, he found himself chasing her over the sands of sleep, chasing her spear in hand till she dashed into the lagoon and became a fish, the most beautiful fish in the world, glimpsed for a moment like a flash of silver.

He had hunted for her till dusk through the trees, beside the lagoon, right to the eastern beach, and now in dreamland he was hunting her again. Hunting her like an animal, possessed with one overmastering desire, the desire to seize her.

Suddenly the dream was shattered. Sitting up he saw the world outside the house clearly in the moonlight as though seen by day; a sound filled his ears—it was the sound of the conch.

He was master of all the sounds of his world, the island was always talking to him. But here was something new and unknown and inimical. It came from the eastern beach, that beach which faced the gateway to the world beyond.

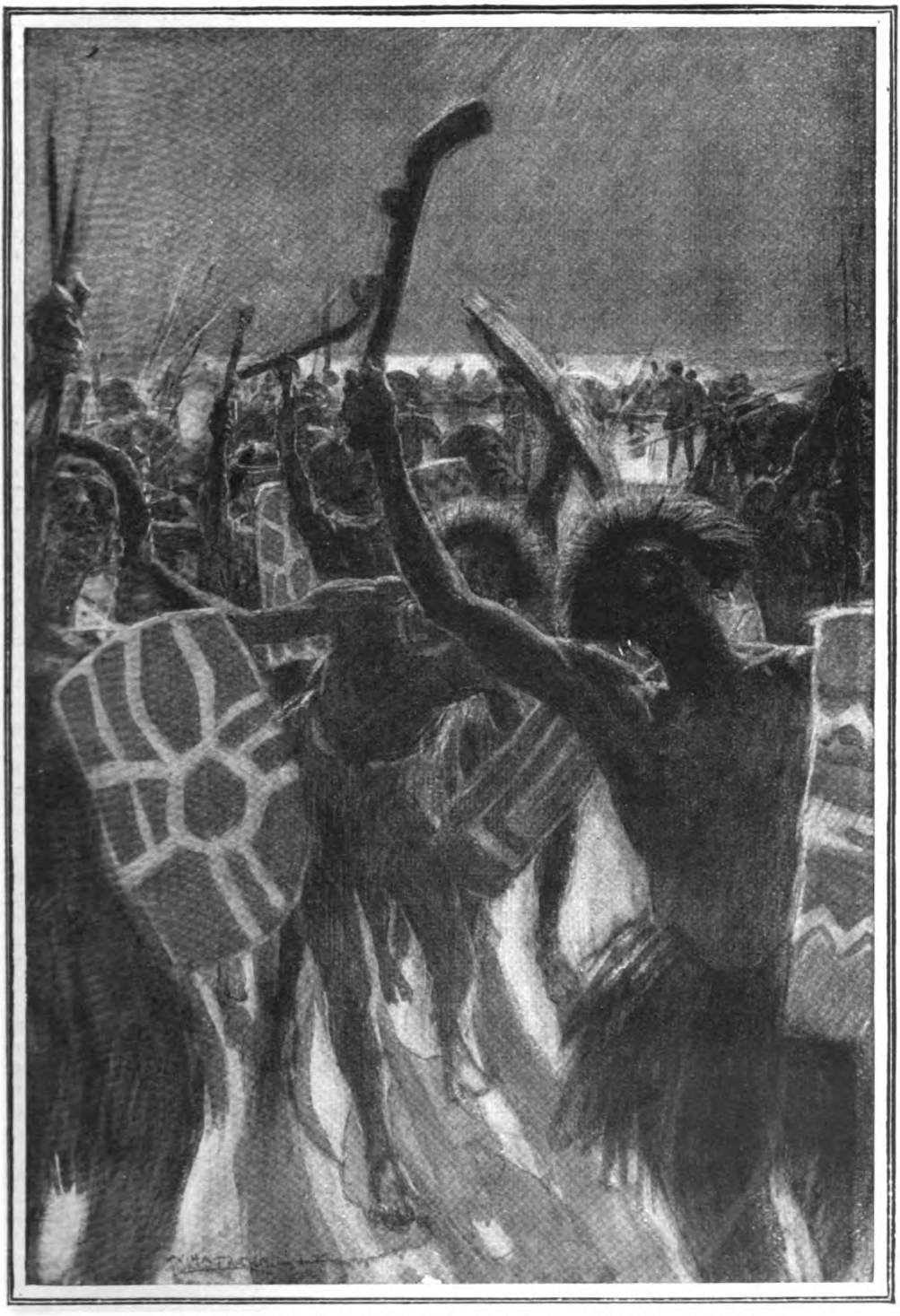
The sound ceased, the echoes died, and the night resumed its silence. Dick, still listening without a movement, heard the reef speaking to the first waves of the ebb, the fall of a leaf on the roof, and the furtive sound of a robber crab by the house wall on the right. Then, rising, he came out into the moonlight, moving silently as his own shadow.

A fish spear was standing against the house wall. He took it and came along by the trees, listening, pausing every now and then, seeming to scent the air like a hound. Nothing. He turned his face towards the lagoon. Nothing. The great mirror lay unruffled to the reef, and beyond the reef the sea stars shone paled by the moonlight, but steadfast and untroubled.

The island said to him: "There is nothing here at all but the things you have always known; that voice was the voice of some sea beast that came like the big fish and has gone."

Yet still he listened.

Ah, what was that? A branch stirred, and, turning, he saw like a ghost amidst the trees—Katafa.



Nothing opposed them but their long shadows drawn on the beach by the moon—shadows that swung clubs and brandished spears.

She was standing, the moonlight on her face and her arms outstretched. Next moment she had turned, vanished, and he was in pursuit. The woods, one vast green glow under the moon, were lit almost as brilliantly as by day, and as she ran he could see, now a glossy shoulder, now her whole form, now nothing but swaying leaves above which the convolvulus flowers seemed the bugles of aerial huntsmen joining in the chase.

He was not hunting alone; the woods tonight were full of armed men, men who at the sound of the conch had spread and entered the groves like a bunch of shadows, beating the trees and glades, dumb as hounds when hot on the scent.

The line Katafa had taken was towards these. Pitcher plants cascaded their water as she ran, dashing them aside, and branches foiled him as he pursued, great perfumed flowers hit him in the face. Now he had almost seized her, and now she was gone, saved by a branch or tangle of liana.

The trees broke to a glade carpeted with slippery moss spread like a snare to betray her. Crossing it, she fell. She was his, he flung himself upon her—and fell on the hard ground. He had not even touched her. By a last miracle she had saved herself and was gone, doubling back through the trees.

The fall half stunned him for a moment; then, getting on his feet, he seized the spear, which all through the chase he had carried slanted over his shoulder, unconsciously or instinctively, just as he had carried it in dreamland. Balked and furious, not knowing what he did, he brandished it now as if threatening some enemy; then, reason returning, he stood resting on it and listening.

He knew she had escaped; to lose sight of a person for half a minute in that place was to lose them. His only chance was to track her by sound, but he could hear nothing. Not the breaking of a twig or the rustle of a leaf came to tell him of where she might be or what line she was taking. He did not even know whether she had dived into the trees, to right or left or before or behind him; the fall had blotted out everything for a moment, and in that moment she had vanished.

With head uptossed and leaning on the spear he stood like a statue, more beautiful than any statue ever hewn from marble. Then his chin sank ever so slightly—a sound had come to him, something that was not the reef.

It was she. He could hear the leaves moving—a step—louder now; she was coming towards him and coming swiftly, she had lost her direction and was blundering back to the place she had started from. He waited without a movement. Then the foliage was dashed aside, and into the glade broke not Katafa, but Ma the son of Laminai, with the moon full upon him. Ma, club in hand, the shark-tooth necklace showing white as his eyeballs in the strong light. Ma, lithe and fierce as a tiger, and petrified for the moment by the sight before him.

The two faced one another without a word. Then the figure of Ma seemed to shrink slightly, relaxed itself suddenly, sprang, slipped on the treacherous moss, and fell with the cruel fish spear bedded in its back and heart. The club shot away across the carpet of moss and Dick was in the act of turning to seize it when out from the trees broke Laminai. Laminai with twenty others behind him. Ma had been the vanguard of these.

Dick turned and ran. Dashing among the leaves he ran, weaponless, defenceless, with sure death on his heels and only one craving—to free himself from the woods, to find an open space, to escape from the branches that checked him, the flowers that hit at him, the veils and veils and veils of leaves; instinctively he made uphill, the pursuit almost touching him, the groves ringing now to the cries of the pursuers and of Talia, Manua, and Leopa, who had recognized him as the slayer of Sru and were shouting the news to Laminai.

XXVIII.

KATAFA amidst the trees, pausing half dazed from the pursuit, and released for a moment from the spell that had made her fly, stood listening.

She had taken the upward way towards the hill-top. The great sward, moon-stricken and surmounted by the rock, gleamed at her through the trees. The glass-house atmosphere of the woods rose around her like an incense. Then, as she stood listening, just at the moment when Ma, bursting from the trees, stood face to face with Dick, she heard a sudden loudening of the surf on the reef—the sound of a single great tumbling wave heaving up from the glacial sea to burst on the coral in foam. Silence, and then through the heat of the night another sound far away and vague, the chanting of gulls disturbed from their sleep and made uneasy by some voice or sign they alone could interpret.

Then, shattering the silence of the woods, came the yell of Laminai as he sprang after Dick, the voices of Talia, Manua, and Leopa, and then the tongue of the whole pack in full cry, the sound of branches broken and leaves cast aside, footfalls, all rising towards her like a tide, and breaking through the trees so close to her that she could see the parting of the leaves and the forms of the pursuers and pursued.

Dick, reaching the sward, made one last effort. Breaking for the rock, he would have reached it and rounded it and dived into the thickness of the woods beyond, where the bog land lay and where he might have found refuge, but the uphill path was treacherous as the moss on the sward. He slipped, fell on one knee, and was surrounded and lost.

A spearman raised his spear to pierce him, but Laminai dashed him aside. Sure now of his vengeance, the son of Uta Mâtu wished to taste it alone, and waving the others off with a sweep of his arm, and standing with his back to the trees, signed to his enemy to rise.

Dick sprang to his feet and stood facing the other with folded arms. He was lost and he knew it. He had no ideas about death, he only knew that as the speared fish was, so he would be, and that at once. He heard without heeding the words pouring out of the mouth of the other, and his gaze never flinched when Laminai, reaching with the spear, touched him on the left breast with the sharp brown point.

On the left breast just below the nipple Laminai laid the point of the spear. Just there the point would enter, piercing the beating heart. Then, swift as light, the father of Ma flung his arm back for the thrust and fell, struggling, with Katafa about his neck.

XXIX.

CREEPING close to the wood edge she had watched like a person in a dream whilst Dick rose to his feet and faced the spearman. She had heard the words of Laminai, she had seen him point the spear, and in those few seconds she had seen death and she had known love, the real love that heeds nothing, even death.

In those few seconds self vanished, and with it the spell that had bound her since childhood, the spell that passion or hatred could not break, that nothing could have broken in the mind of a Kanaka.

As the arm flung back for the fatal stroke she launched herself, Laminai came crashing to earth, the spear flew from his hand and Dick caught it. Useless, but for one thing, the shout that went up from Laminai's men as Dick, seizing the spear, cried "Katafa!" Instantly they recognized her, the girl who was dead, the Taminanite whom no man dare touch, who dared touch no man. They saw her ghost clinging to Laminai and, breaking, they ran like curs, filling the woods with their cries.

But Laminai did not run. Rolling on the ground, fighting and struggling to free himself from the creature that had him in its grip, teeth in his hair and arms round his neck and legs locked in his, screaming like a horse in terror or rage, he tried to rise whilst Dick, the spear held short, not daring to thrust, called on Katafa to release him. Then, as with a great and mighty effort the brute half rose, Dick, seeing his chance, drove the spear into his gaping mouth, raising the butt with the stroke so that the point emerged from the neck.

Then with Katafa in his arms, Katafa clinging to him almost as tightly as she had clung to the other, he made upwards across the sward till he reached the rock. He was making for the southern woods, where the bad lands would give them a hiding place and protection, but as he reached the summit something seized him and wrestled with him and tried to drive him back. It was the wind.

Hot as the breath of a tiger, blowing up from southward through the clear night it had come, tremendous and sudden like a giant springing on the island; shouting and dashing the trees together, clashing the branches, stripping the leaves and sending the nuts flying like cannon-balls.

It took Nan from his post and sent him flying into the lagoon, the post after him; it stripped the mat sails from the anchored fleet and sent them sailing off like dish-cloths; it drove the limp, dead body of Laminai up against the trees, the spear still sticking in its throat.

Dick, with Katafa's hair streaming across his face, half bent, nearly blown from his feet, took shelter to leeward of the rock. Here there was peace, though the whole island beneath them was yelling and tossing under an absolutely cloudless sky and in the strong clear light of the moon. It was the Haya e Matadi, the great wind without rain that once in a decade swept Karolin and the sea for a hundred miles beyond, coming always at night and always at the full of the moon, lasting only an hour and more dreaded than a hurricane because more mysterious.

Here, sheltered in the cup of the wind, they lay in the light of the quiet moon—the fight, the killing of Laminai, the still imminent presence of death, all as remote from them as the tossing trees below, the thundering reef, and the infinite moonlit sea.

XXX.

WHEN the fighting men of Karolin began their assault on the woods they broke into two companies, one under Laminai and Ma, the other under Utali, a son of Makara, once chief of the southern tribe. When the southern tribe had been destroyed, Utali, a boy of some fourteen years, had been spared—he and a few old men and several women past child-bearing. He had grown up with the northern tribe, become one of them, fought in their wars and fished in their waters, and forgotten and forgiven. He knew that Makara had been slain by the followers of Uta Matu, and slain on Palm Tree beach. That did not matter a bit to him; he bore no grudge, he had always been well treated by Uta, and his father, as he remembered him, had been a brute—"a mouth to shout, a foot to kick, and a hand to strike."

He had bravely set off with the others, thinking of nothing but the work in hand; as the finest and most powerful man after Laminai, the command of the second division had been given to him, and, leading it, he went off through the trees by the bank of the left arm of

the lagoon whilst Laminai's men struck due west.

Now Utali carried no love for his father, but he carried still the fear of him, a much more enduring possession if a parent gives it to his offspring, and it was not till the woods of Palm Tree surrounded him that Utali remembered that Makara was a ghost and that he had been made a ghost here on this island by the chief whom he (Utali) was now serving.

A nice complication!

"Suppose," thought Utali, "my father were to appear at the head of his men armed as of old and thirsting to kill!"

His mind drew the picture and cast it aside as he drove forward, trampling the ground lianas and shouldering the branches aside.

Suddenly he halted. The boom of the great wave that Katafa had heard came through the trees, followed by the garrulous chanting of the gulls. He stood listening. He knew every sound of the sea and the meaning of each. A storm of some sort was approaching and his first thought was of the canoes. Then he heard Laminai giving tongue and the sound of the chase as it swept to the hill-top, and turning, leading his men, he began to climb. Laminai had evidently taken no heed of the warning from the sea.

IT had been arranged that the two divisions should join up should the elusive enemy give battle to either. Each division considered itself all-powerful and ready to meet any contingency, and it was right, for the spears were poisoned with angara, a species of oap, deadly and instantaneous in its effects. So Utali did not hasten his steps unduly, keeping his men fresh for whatever might be to do and going cautiously with an eye and ear for surprises.

The shouting suddenly ceased as if cut off by a closed door, and Utali, holding up his hand in the green twilight, halted. The cries he had heard had been the sounds of pursuit, not of battle. Why had they ceased so suddenly?

He listened and waited. Not a sound. He stood still, listening, his mind filled with wild conjectures, whilst up above, Laminai, spear in hand, stood fronting Dick, touching his breast with the spear-point, flinging back his arm for the thrust.

A yell split the night above as Laminai's division caught sight of Katafa, and Utali, taking it for the shout of battle, charged upwards through the trees, followed by his men, to the assistance of Laminai. They had not gone twenty paces when they found that they were being charged. Down through the trees towards them a host was pouring—there was only one instantaneous solution—Laminai's division had been utterly and silently destroyed, and the destroyers were coming, ghosts and evil spirits, no doubt led by the ghostly Makara.

"Makara's men are coming! Makara's men are coming! Death! Death!" shrieked Utali, not daring to turn and run as he might have done from a living enemy. Then, thrusting with his spear at a dark form that sprang at him out of the gloom ahead, he missed and fell, pierced to death, whilst the form, yelling with fright and rage, passed over him.

The whole of Laminai's followers, stampeded by the vision of the ghost of the girl who had been eaten by sharks, charging down through the trees of a place now filled with ghosts, only wanted the cry that Makara's men were coming to finish them. Makara, that terrible chief, who had been slain here by their fathers and brothers.

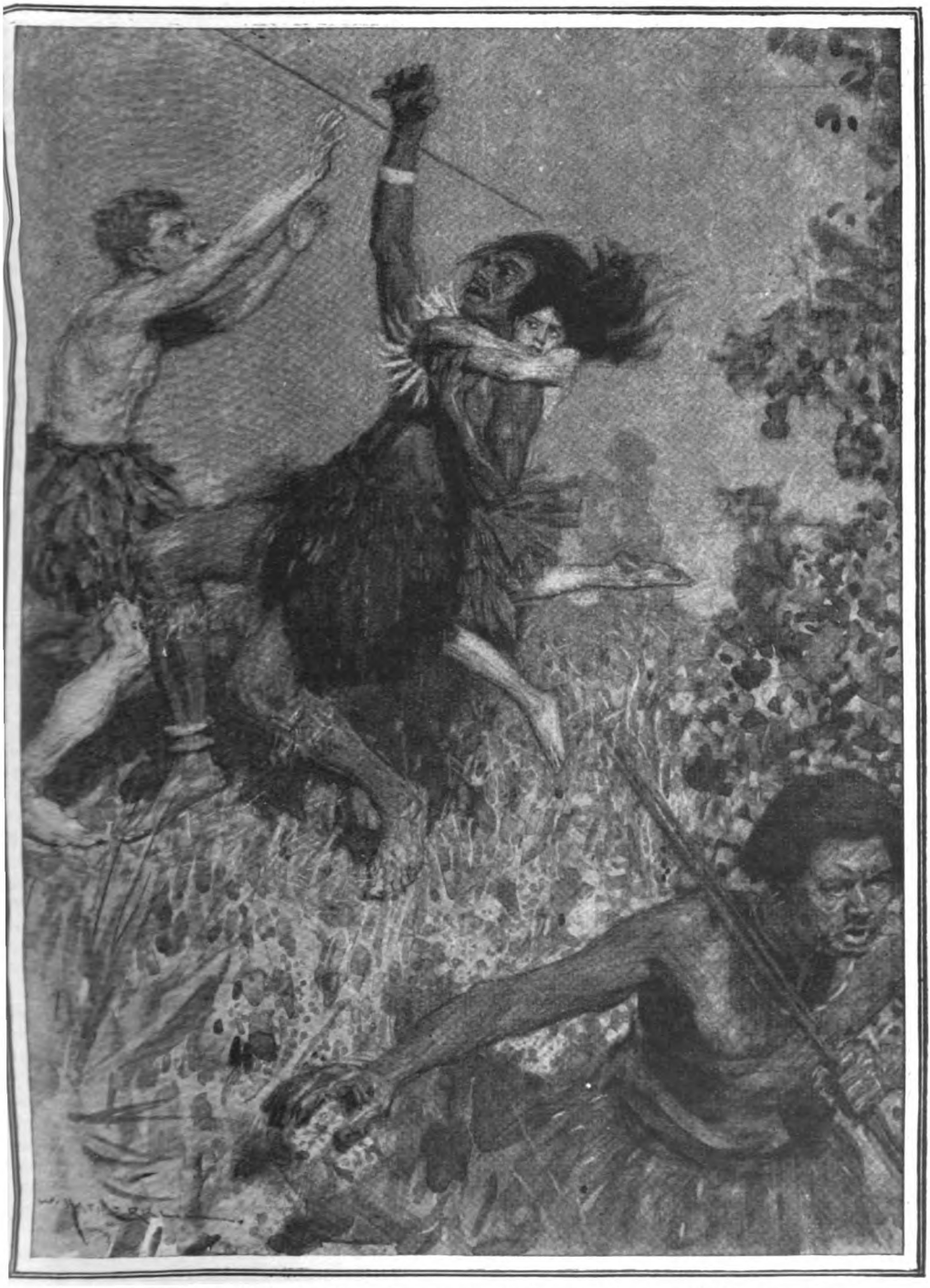
The yell of the new-risen wind from the south, the dashing about of the trees and the great alternating splashes of moonlight and shadow, raised their rage and terror to dementia, and as they saw Utali and his warriors and charged them and were charged in turn, imaginary ghosts attacking imaginary ghosts, nothing on earth could be compared to the fight, and nothing in dreamland.

Twenty men alone escaped from that psychological battle, twenty of Laminai's men, spearless, daggerless, torn by brambles, gasping and running for the canoes, whilst the trees roared above them and tossed them out to the shouting beach, where three of the canoes, dragged from their anchorage, lay broken and ruined. One canoe alone remained, straining at its rope, the fellow in her waving his arms and shouting, screaming, as he saw the survivors taking the water, "Karaka! Karaka! Karaka! Sharks! Sharks! Sharks!"

The lagoon was full of sharks driven in by the storm, but the survivors neither heard the cries of the anchor watch nor would they have heeded. Worse things were behind them than sharks. Makara and his ghostly followers were on their heels. They struck out across the tossing water, the moonlight steady on the bobbing heads that vanished one by one till ten only were left, saved by the number and rapacity of the sharks. The brutes foiled themselves by getting in each other's way, and the ten survivors, scrambling on board, some over the outrigger gratings, some over the side, cut free from the anchor rope, seized the paddles, and headed for the break.

No sooner had they cut the rope and struck the water with the paddles than they saw their blunder. The tide had caught them. The full ebb tide rushing from the two arms of the lagoon had them in its grip, bearing them to the break, beyond which the out-boiling water had set up a terrible cross sea.

The heavy canoe was under-manned; they could do nothing but steer and shout as they went, swept like a toboggan on the sheeting



Then, swift as light, he flung his arm back for the thrust and fell, struggling, with Katafa about his neck.

foam, stern lifting, bow lifting, shooting through the break into the lumping sea that turned them turtle.

A wave took the canoe and smashed it on the coral, destroying the outrigger, and a great king wave festooned with foam took the remains and hove it on to the reef high and dry, stern stuck in a cleft and bow in air, a last touch of the fantasy of the sea—that sister of Fate.

So, at a stroke, went the navy of Karolin and all her fighting men, destroyed by their own imaginations and the child of the woman they had slain long years ago.

XXXI.

THE gulls were crying above the reef, and away in the east below the sea-line a rose-red fire was burning, paling gradually, passing into the starless infinite distance of the true dawn.

Then as the ripple of light on the horizon waters turned to a ripple of fire, and the birds in the groves chattered out in answer to the gulls, Dick, flinging sleep off suddenly as one flings a blanket, sat up, striking out at the vision of Laminai. Laminai, spear in hand and ready to lunge. For a moment the dead chief stood before him hard in the imagination as a real figure, then it vanished, and his eyes fell on Katafa.

She was lying on her side fast asleep, her face buried in her arms. He watched her, his eyes consuming her in the strengthening light. He knew nothing of love; he only knew that the something that had revealed itself to him and evaded him was his—his, and the whole unearthly world that surrounded it.

The voices of the gulls and the sound of the reef were part of her, and the strengthening light part of her, the rising sun, his own very life, were part of her—and she was his.

Had she suddenly been snatched from him, the voices of the gulls and the sound of the reef, the rising sun—every bit of the old world she had made new would have fallen in on him and crushed him with despair, and yet only yesterday he had run past her bent on the business of making a sail for the dinghy, run past her heedless as though she had been a tree stump, and had she been taken from him then, would he have cared?

As the sun struck Katafa full, from her night-black hair to her little feet, she moved; then suddenly casting sleep away, she sat up.

Just as Dick's waking vision had been the man he had fought with, hers was Dick. She saw him, with wide-pupilled eyes that saw nothing of this world, and holding out her arms to the vision cried, "Taori!"

It faded as her arms clasped themselves round the reality.

They had climbed the sun-warmed rock.

The vast columnar swell was marching across the Pacific smooth as though the Haya e Matadi had never blown, and nothing to tell of the great wind remained but a few broken trees in the groves and the up-ended canoe on the reef. Dick could see it as they sat, the sun now high above the horizon and the land breeze fanning out across the sea in spaces of violet shadow.

He pointed it out to Katafa and she nodded her head. She knew.

Instinct told her that the men of Karolin had been destroyed, that something had happened, something that came with that wind which she remembered now like a wind that had blown in dreamland. The sense of security was everywhere ringed and completed by the peace of the violet sea.

Here, high above the world as the birds, they could see a thousand square leagues of the blue Pacific, from the limitless North to the far pale sky trace that was Karolin.

Some drinking nuts had been blown right from the mid zone of trees up to the sward; he had fetched them and they had drunk the contents. Neither of them had eaten since the day before, but Dick, who had not the sure instinct for safety that possessed Katafa, had no idea of returning to the house till he was certain that the enemy was gone. He wanted to explore and see. The wrecked canoe filled his mind with a thrill. From it came a waft of the battle of the night before, bringing up the vision of Ma, the man he had speared like a fish, and with the recollection his nostrils broadened as the sound of pursuit came again to his ears and the feel of the branches he had dashed aside in his escape. He tripped again on the sward, and again he faced Laminai and death, again he thrust the spear into the gaping mouth.

He almost forgot Katafa; love and passion were nothing for a moment as the blaze of anger broke up again in his mind—the fury of the man who has been attacked, and who has killed his attacker, the rage of the defenceless man who, being unarmed, has had to run.

Telling Katafa not to move from the hill-top till his return, he slipped down from the rock and ran towards the groves. Laminai, spear and all, had been blown by a last gust of the great wind in amongst the trees. Dick, coming on the body, disengaged the spear, and, carrying it slanted over his shoulder, came along down, taking the track that Manua, Leopa, and Talia had taken the night before as they raced howling with terror and driven by imagination to their death.

Nothing could be more peaceful than the woods this morning: the great wind, broken by the hill, had left scarcely a trace, the morning breeze left scarcely a sound louder than the rainy patter of leaf on leaf.

Bursting from beneath the great apron leaves

of a bread-fruit, Dick suddenly found his path barred by a brown naked man on all fours. The man seemed crawling on hands and knees. In the merry dancing lights that showered as the breeze footed it in the foliage overhead, he seemed to move, but he was dead and supported in his position by a decayed tree stump across which he had fallen. The *rigor mortis*, setting in instantly from the poison of some spear or dagger, had turned his limbs stiff as the legs of a table; on his back the siftings of the forest had already fallen, the white droppings of a bird, a leaf, a single gummy coloured petal of the hootoo.

Beyond this man who crawled yet never moved stood a man clasping a tree bole tightly with head thrown back and a light wand-like spear through his shoulder. He had caught at the tree before falling and clung; still clinging in the death rigor, his face, turned black, with eyes wide open and mouth agape, seemed gazing wildly in search of the man who had struck him, yet there was nothing in his line of sight but an orchid swinging in the perfumed air on a loop of liantasse.

Beyond, men were lying in heaps, singly, in pairs, on their backs with arms outspread, clasped together in a deadly embrace, petrified by the poison that kills like a pole-axe, half hidden, half revealed by the trees and the brambles and the still green beauty of the ferns.

Makaro and his men, slain long ago on the eastern beach, had taken their revenge in full, and as Dick passed swiftly the knowledge came to him that there was nothing more to fear—all the men in the world seemed lying here stricken to nothingness.

As he broke on to the eastern beach he saw the three canoes that had been driven up on the sands. Two lay on their sides, and one bottom up, with outrigger smashed; away on the reef the fourth stuck up just as he had seen it from the hill-top.

A coral-headed club lay near one of the canoes. He cast away the spear he was holding and seized the club. That was a weapon worth carrying; yet, having handled it and swung it in the face of the quiet lagoon and desolate eastern sea, he lost interest in it and let it drop, and turned to examine the canoes. There was no one here to use a weapon against, no one but the men in the woods, those strange brown men so stiff yet so seemingly alive, so full of anger, rage, and terror, so swiftly running, so furiously hitting, yet so still.

As he overhauled the canoes Dick saw that their construction was identical with that of the canoe of Katafa. The old smashed canoe had engraved itself upon his memory in every detail; nothing was different but the size and the number of paddles that would be used. He examined the broken mast and the sail of the only one from which the wind had not stripped the sail. It was the same as Katafa's.

Then as he turned away something that had been washed up on the sand caught his eye. He stooped and picked it up. It was Nan. Nan's head, that the wind had blown into the lagoon, and the lagoon had faithfully delivered to the sands; Nan, looking terribly debauched and battered, but still Nan.

How Katafa had created so much personality with a few cuts of a knife must remain a mystery. She had, and the thing was Itself. Every moment was making it more so, for its fuzzy head was drying rapidly in the sun, and Dick, recognizing this, placed it on the hot sand higher up and started to hunt for the pole.

There was no pole to be seen on the reef, and he reckoned that if it had been blown into the lagoon after the head, it would come ashore on the same drift. He was right. He found it just where the tree roots on the left of the beach came into the water like great claws, and, fetching it, fixed Nan again on its tip.

Then with the pole on his shoulder he came running along the lagoon side through the trees. Canoes, clubs, dead men, even Nan himself, were forgotten. The memory of Katafa had rushed suddenly out at him from the trees, and the sudden passionate desire to get to her nearly drove him back along the road he had come, would have done so but for the fact that his main purpose that morning, after scouting, was food.

There was food at the house, a crab he had put by, and some baked fish and taro, and the quickest way to the house was by the lagoon bank. Arrived there, he stuck Nan against the house, fetched out the food from where he had hidden it to protect it from the robber crabs, and sat down to eat.

Katafa must have been as hungry as himself, but his hunger made him forget that fact, although all the time he was eating he was thinking of her. When he reached her at last, labouring up the hillside with the remains of the food wrapped in a great leaf, she was in the shelter of the rock, asleep, and, placing the leaf on the ground, he sat down beside her.

(To be concluded.)

"I sprang at him to try to prevent him carrying her off, but he struck me with a spanner."

THE AIR KING'S TRIUMPH

by

HARRY HARPER

ILLUSTRATED BY E VERPILLEUX

THE famous "falling leaf"! No one, that afternoon, who saw Frank Girdlestone, acclaimed enthusiastically as "the British Air King," perform this new flying marvel of beauty and daring will ever forget the spectacle they witnessed.

Packed in masses, from the expert lovers of aerial sport on the club lawn to the keen-eyed thousands in the big enclosures, there was a breathless hush as Girdlestone, climbing high, threw up his arms suddenly—a tiny, lonely figure there in the sky—and relinquished all control of his aeroplane.

Whereupon, like some living thing which feels suddenly its freedom, the beautiful white monoplane made a thrilling, plunging dive. With a flutter it checked its descent, hung motionless for a few heart-beats, and then, rocking sideways, literally fell through the air, pell-mell, for hundreds of feet.

There was a long-drawn gasp from the great crowd as, still utterly uncontrolled, it arrested with a jerk its own fall; only, a second later, to reel backwards terribly in the air, and begin an earthward swoop that threatened to end disastrously upon the grass of the aerodrome below.

But an eye keen as a hawk's, though for the moment its owner sat deliberately inert, watched from the cockpit of that machine its every dip and fall.

Just above the 'drome, after its fluttering, darting, trembling fall—that movement which had gained the trick its name of the "falling leaf"—the monoplane came to a pause. It rocked. It quivered. And this

was the psychological moment. Another instant, left uncontrolled, it would have plunged sheer to destruction. But Girdlestone was watching for that moment. Unerringly, just at that right instant and not one second too soon, his strong, quick hands sought the controls, and with one super-expert touch he sent that graceful, responsive machine on a precisely-governed, swooping glide which brought its wheels to earth in the centre of the field, amid the roaring applause of the delighted, sport-loving multitude.

MEANWHILE, in the big sheds where the 'planes were, preparations were going ahead for the next event in the long afternoon of flying sport.

"Where's Miss Manders?" called the aerodrome manager, bustling up.

Then he paused, smiling, as his eye caught a very pretty picture.

The world-famed girl-parachutist, accompanied as she was always by her white-haired mother, whose kind, shrewd eyes never left her, was completely oblivious, for the moment, of the fact that the time had come for her to entertain the assembled thousands. She was, in fact, forgetful utterly of her fame, engaged very seriously upon a piece of private benevolence.

And a perfectly charming picture she made, her bobbed golden hair all ruffled, her cheeks glowing with the health of the outdoor girl, her slim boyish figure set off saucily in neat-cut breeches, surmounted by a tight-fitting, snow-white sweater.

It was poor Guido, the patient, hard-working mechanic of the Spanish air-champion, Señor Blasco, who was the lucky recipient of Miss Manders's ministrations. Guido, preparing his master's great black, sinister-looking monoplane for the much-advertised speed race, had burned his hand and arm painfully with petrol; and now, deliciously businesslike and grave with salves and bandages, and with her mother at her elbow with scissors and pins, the girl-parachutist was absorbed in her self-imposed first-aid task.

"By Jove! Where are the photographers? Here's a picture for them!" cried the manager, pausing in his admiration to turn to his assistant in charge of the sheds.

"Yes; but now just cast your eye at Señor Blasco," replied that official. "I don't know why it is," he added, irrelevantly, "but that chap, with all his polished, Spanish-grandee manner, simply gets on my nerves."

Blasco, tall, lean, saturnine—the man, as he was called, "with the nerves of steel"—was in truth well worth looking at, though the spectacle was scarcely reassuring.

With arms folded across his leather flying-jacket, and looking almost incredibly lean and tall, Blasco was unconscious of all scrutiny and of everything around him—save that beautiful girl busy with her bandaging.

It was, in truth, upon Miss Gladys Manders, who thrilled countless thousands by her parachute jumps from 'planes, that Blasco's dark, passionate eyes were riveted. They burned, they glowed. He drew his thin-lipped mouth tight with suppressed emotion. Blasco, man of fire behind that cold, icily-polite mask of his, was tumultuously, madly in love with this fair, roguish English girl, who baffled, intrigued, and delighted him by her entire unconsciousness and friendly frankness, and by her utter difference from those posing, painted, affected beauties with whom he had had so many "affairs" during his flying tours of Europe.

But no one, and least of all Gladys Manders's watchful mother, relished in the least the whirlwind-like attentions to Gladys of the usually reserved, self-centred Spaniard; and for the simple reason that, though an actual, formal engagement was to await the completion of the busy flying season, it was well known that the man who had won Gladys's affections, as well as so many air-race cups—and won them cleanly, sportingly, and well—was merry-hearted Frank Girdlestone.

Thrown into each other's company at flying gatherings all over this country, and on the Continent as well, and drawn together irresistibly by their healthy-minded love of the open air, Frank and Gladys had flown, motored, and golfed together, until, under the benevolent eye of Mrs. Manders, they had warmed to each other through all the stages of friendship into those of actual love. And everyone who saw them together—laughing, joking, bright-eyed—exclaimed that here, truly, was the ideal match. And the charm of both, though they were famous, was their complete lack of affectation, or of desire to take any undue advantage of their eminence in aerial sport.

Generous-minded almost to a fault, Gladys had, none the less, been vaguely disturbed recently by the ardent manner towards her of the Spanish champion. At first she had thought it might be natural to him—some exaggerated, foreign courtesy; but soon she saw—she could not, in fact, help seeing—that he was singling her out to a marked, embarrassing degree.

And Frank, her lover, open-hearted sportsman though he was, and ready to be the friend of all men, had noted with a surprise and irritation which were new to him how the great Spanish flyer, man of the world though he usually was, seemed now

to be throwing all discretion to the wind, and losing his head utterly in a direction where it should be plain to him he was causing annoyance rather than pleasure.

But what could be done? Gladys, usually sunny in her smiles to all she met, had now chilled her manner deliberately when she met the Spaniard; and Frank, though it was foreign to him also to be anything but gay, had let Blasco see unmistakably that any continuance of his conduct would be resented greatly.

And so it was that, for the last few days, there had been a very uncomfortable feeling among the usually care-free inhabitants of the great aerodrome. Blasco was silent, morose. He was mentally in a state of seething, dangerous calm. He spoke to no one. He treated abominably his poor engine-mechanic, Guido, and never for a moment, when she was within sight, did he take his sombre eyes from Gladys Manders. It was one of those pitiably uncomfortable situations which arise when the fiercest of human emotions are permitted to rage unchecked. And, with a man like the Spaniard to reckon with, some crisis seemed impending, fraught with almost any possibility. Those, in fact, of the onlookers who saw most of what was going on felt a growing anxiety they could hardly have put in words.

That afternoon, though, and at that precise moment, there was no time for introspection. With a cheering word to Guido, who eyed her with the mute affection and gratitude of some big, patient dog, Gladys turned to speed out on to the sunlit aerodrome and do her eagerly-awaited parachute jump.

As she passed near Blasco, a tormented, thwarted look in his gloomy, brooding eyes, the Spanish aviator stepped forward, as though moved by some uncontrollable impulse, in order to speak to her.

But Gladys, determined now, in a sudden resolve, to be cruel so that there should be no possible mistake as to her attitude, deliberately and very plainly ignored him. She walked, in fact, straight out of the shed, looking unswervingly in front of her, as though the Spaniard had not been anywhere in sight.

It was a palpable, obvious "cut," and Blasco, after hesitating, turned on his heel and, his face ashen with rage, made his way with fiercely-rapid strides to the small shed, alongside the main buildings, in which his swift racer was housed.

Out on the breezy 'drome a moment later, perched on the wing of an ascending 'plane, the girl parachutist had forgotten all else save her desire to perform her great trick well and please the public who were always so generous to her.

Up she sped, the pilot of her 'plane rising rapidly in circles, till, the right height and position gained, he headed his machine straight across above the aerodrome, and the girl, with a nerve which knew no tremor of apprehension, cast herself outward and downward and, a graceful, supple, diving figure in the impalpable ocean of the air, shot down in a breath-taking rush until, her big white parachute opening, her fall was checked and she alighted, sprightly and unconcerned, almost exactly opposite the popular enclosures.

Amid a crash of applause someone stepped out and handed her a bouquet. Then came another and another, until, laughing merrily, she sauntered across, flower-laden, to the big shed.

OF what actually happened in the next few minutes no one, even now, has a very clear conception, because all was such rush and bustle for the ensuing race. Certainly Gladys hastened straight to her mother, as she did always after one of her parachute descents, and handed into her keeping the flowers she had received. Then, had she done what she also usually did next, she would have walked behind the sheds to the aerodrome hotel, and there, in the rooms she and her mother occupied, have changed into a dainty frock.

But what did happen, so far as could be gathered, is that some chance, unidentified messenger, one of those numerous handymen working round and about the sheds, hurried up to her with a clumsily-worded message that Señor Blasco's mechanic, Guido, was in much pain again with his hand, and wondered if she could spare him just a minute. And then, as might be imagined, Gladys must have turned, with an exclamation of pity, and stepped rapidly towards the shed in which the Spaniard's black-winged racer was already having its engine tested.

Following which, to those who saw what happened, the whole thing was more like some nightmare than anything else. For suddenly, amid all the comings and goings prior to the big race, the doors of that shed of Blasco's swung open. He was seen in the driving-seat of his gaunt machine, his face white with a deadly pallor, his eyes flashing wildly. Hoarse, urgent shouts he gave, and surprised spectators, standing near the shed, scuttled for safety as the great grim machine, its air-screw whirling and its many-cylindered engine roaring, shot out from the shed, tumultuously, under its own power.

Out across the aerodrome the big racer tore, blowing a great blast of air behind its thousand-turns-a-minute screw. Officials

She shot down in a breath-taking rush until, her big white parachute opening, her fall was checked and she alighted almost exactly opposite the popular enclosures.

gripped their hats—stared in surprise; then, reckoning that this must be some eleventh-hour eccentricity on Blasco's part, and that he was going for a trial spin just on the very eve of the race, they took out their field-glasses and peered through them at the rising machine.

"But what on earth's he got in the little cockpit in front of his driving-seat?" was one of the first questions asked.

"That's the position of the engine-mechanic," said somebody who had been looking over the Spaniard's machine.

"Yes, I know," replied the other expert, focusing his glasses carefully, "but I can't make out what it is he's actually got there in that front seat now."

And, even while he was speculating, surprise turned to sheer amazement. For the Spaniard was not circling the course in any trial trip. On the contrary, heading off like a great, wide-winged eagle, he was deliberately leaving the aerodrome behind him and making away over the country-side at three times the speed of an express train.

Out from the aerodrome offices rushed the harassed manager, word having reached him quickly of this new and perplexing development; but his hasty questions, irritably put, were cut short by another sensation which piled swiftly on those that had gone before.

For there was a sudden hoarse, frenzied cry from the direction of the Spaniard's empty shed; and poor Guido, the mechanic, gesticulating wildly with his bandaged arm, and with blood now streaming down his forehead, struggled forth among the horrified officials, words coming from his lips in a torrent of broken English.

"Señor Girdlestone! Where's Señor Girdlestone?"

So much those around him heard distinctly; and Frank himself, who was looking over his machine nearby on the starting-line, came with hasty steps and pushed his way through the gathering, gaping throng.

"Quick, señor!" gasped Guido, catching sight of him. "I tell you—I tell you gladly; though that black devil may kill me when he finds out what I've done. She—mademoiselle—is in that machine with him, helpless. I tell you so because I saw him do it with my own eyes. He clapped something on a cloth to her face—some drug. She fell all limp. Then he gathered her up and thrust her into the little forward cockpit. I sprang at him to try to prevent him, but he struck me with a spanner so that I fell on my knees and was blown almost over by the rush of wind as he started up the big engine. He's gone off with her, I say! His fury has turned to madness. It is Miss Manders, unconscious, that he has up there with him in that machine!"

IF a bombshell had been dropped into that little circle, the sheer consternation could not have been greater. For an instant the officials stood rooted to the spot, appalled. They could scarcely believe their ears. Even Frank Girdlestone, brain trained to act upon the instant, stood thus, momentarily spellbound.

But with him the inaction vanished first. Then, with jaw grim-set and eyes steely, he was at Guido's side, steadying that swaying figure with kindly hands, while he plied him with quick questions which came like pistol-shots.

"Where's he taking her, Guido? Where's he making for? Quick, man! Pull yourself together, there's a good chap, Guido. Where's he going, I say? He's making off on some definite course. What's he got in his mind? Where's he steering?"

Guido, his eyes wandering, his limbs trembling, looked up into Frank's face for a moment, as though he hardly heard or understood. Then, pulling himself together, with an effort that brought a spasm of pain to his face, he clutched Frank's arm convulsively.

"Let me think," he muttered, hoarsely. "Let me think for the sake of that angel who took away the burning in my arm. Where would he go? Where is there for him to go? His tanks are full of petrol, señor, and at the speed of that great 'bird' of his he can go hundreds of miles without needing to alight. He would go a long way, señor. He would—he would—— Ah! The saints be praised! I have it! He would go to the old château, señor—to the château below the mountains. There is the wide open space for landing between the trees and the terrace. There's nobody living there now save the old half-crippled housekeeper and her blind husband. They look after it for him, señor. They are his janitors. It is his family château, old and ruined. But he never goes there as a rule. It is too gloomy, he says. He would——"

Poor Guido was rambling on when Frank's voice, imperative, rose above his.

"Bring me some air-maps, quick," he cried to the manager's assistant, who was at his elbow. "Maps of France, Spain, Italy. Any you have."

At a run that official set off; and hardly had he sped away when Frank, casting a swift calculating glance at that machine of the Spaniard's which was already a black elusive speck, high and far-off in the sky, was rapping out orders, tersely worded, to the two trusted mechanics who went

everywhere with him, and who were as well-disciplined as they were deft in movement.

"Fill her up with every gallon of petrol she'll hold," he commanded, pointing to his monoplane racer on the starting-line; and the mechanics, with quick nods, went to work as though each second was precious—as, verily, it was.

Now the man with the maps was panting at Frank's elbow, and Guido, dropping on his knees before them as they were spread out on the turf, began muttering in eager haste as he turned bloodshot eyes from one to the other.

Two he tossed aside with hasty imprecations, turning his head for a moment to stare at that vanishing speck in the sky; then, with a quick glad cry, he pounced upon a third and drew Frank down beside him.

"Here, señor! This gives it! Look! Below and behind the mountains here—just on the Spanish side of the mountains. The trick in flying there, let me tell you, is not to venture right above the jagged, dangerous peaks, where the cloud-banks hang low, but to steer out seaward—so!—and skirt round the back of them. Then you turn again, thus, and the long valley and the wood lie beneath you."

Frank, watching, nodded with tight-closed lips and half-shut eyes. Air maps had no mysteries for him. His trained eye was running over that wide gap of land and sea—seven hundred miles if it was a mile—and visualizing already the course he would steer, the height he would fly, the landmarks he would peer down earthward for as his distance-devouring craft left the miles behind it.

Time! The time-factor! That was everything! The thought pounded in his brain. He must get away. Never mind anything else now. He must be in the air, crouching behind that great engine of his, eating up the miles. Confound it! How these people crowded round him, asking all these questions, suggesting all manner of things no one could possibly find time to do. He must be aloft—now, without another instant's delay. He saw that stretch of the earth's surface, engraved as it were in his mind's eye. He was plotting out his compass-course, standing there silent amid that shouting, jostling crowd. Then, thrusting aside impatiently those who, with the best intentions, were buzzing round him with excited talk, he sped at a run, looking neither right nor left, till he stood beside his air machine.

Another instant and he had vaulted into the cockpit, and the mighty racing engine, developing its full-throated five hundred horse-power, was drowning all other sounds with a clamorous, car-splitting roar.

A nod, as he settled himself, stern-faced, drawing down his goggles over tight-fitting leather helmet, and the trained mechanics, leaping aside, allowed the machine to spring forward like a great, slim hound from its leash.

No one, even on that aerodrome, had ever seen such an ascent before. Right up off the ground, more in a great spring than an ordinary climb, Frank took that craft of his. With a fierce, finely-controlled swing he brought her round. With a hand that was rock-steady, in spite of the stress of that moment, he threw open his throttle, and like an arrow from the bow that winged projectile, climbing as it sped roaring across the sky, grew smaller and smaller to the eye, with echoing murmurs of its great engine, and vanished in its grim pursuit.

NOW of that great air-chase, a classic already among aerial sportsmen, Frank declares often, with an apologetic smile, that he has nothing but a hazy recollection. His first instinct, height gained, was to sweep the sky ahead with half-shut, peering eyes. But that other machine had disappeared. A faint mist upon the horizon had swallowed it up. So it was a case, now, of a pursuit by map and compass, rather than by eye. Whereupon, with the methodical swiftness of a man who was entirely at home in the air, Frank busied himself, there high aloft, in his tiny, wind-shielded cockpit. True to her course the bow of the machine swung; and the rhythmically-roaring engine forward, doing its full number of revolutions a minute with a precision that warmed Frank's heart, increased the speed of that "flying bullet" until the needle of the recorder, creeping steadily across its dial, stood quivering at just on two hundred and forty miles an hour!

Four miles a minute!

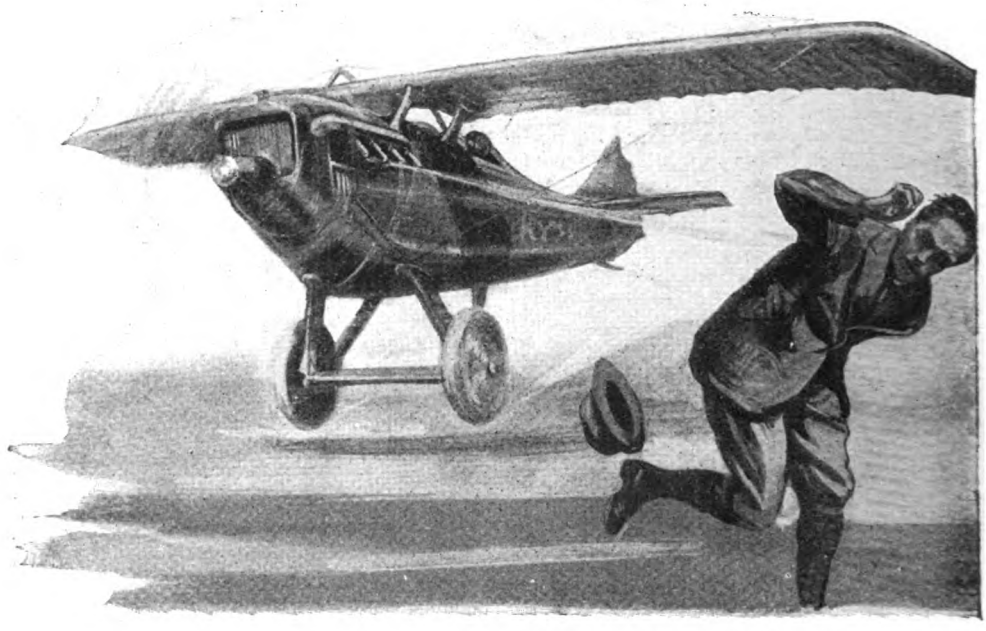
Frank nodded to himself with a little satisfied smile. This, he knew, was absolutely the limit speed of a machine which, according to expert calculations, must be, at that moment, the fastest thing in the world. What the Spaniard's could do, when pressed desperately as he would press it, Frank was not quite certain; but he felt pretty sure, as he sat there thinking quickly, that, even if it were a question of only a few miles an hour, he was at the controls of appreciably the faster machine. Whereupon, nursing his great motor a trifle, remembering the long miles before him, he eased off his throttle and the speed-dial needle moved a little back.

So, watching a dial here and a gauge there, and with his eyes roving from map to compass and back again to map, Frank shot like some great winged shell across the

face of the land, until, glancing down, he saw the sea beneath him, shrouded slightly by mist. Ever his eyes peered ahead, but that black, ill-omened, hawk-like shape of the Spaniard's 'plane never showed any sign in the sky ahead. Was Guido wrong? Was he on a wild-goose chase? Frank's heart, stout though it was, chilled at the mere thought of that, and, clenching his teeth, he concentrated his mind upon

But Frank, immovable now in his purpose once his mind was made up, determined to drive unswervingly on, saving thereby many a mile, and, by climbing to dizzy heights, rush over that threatening, towering wall, even though, in so doing, the danger dogged him of some fearful impact with a cloud-obscured peak.

And it was now or never. His face grave, preoccupied, as he reviewed his chances,



Surprised spectators, standing near the shed, scuttled

the little row of instruments before him.

Now, as he sat there, devouring miles southward, so high that when clouds drifted below he lost sight altogether of mother earth, a great resolve took shape in his swiftly-working mind.

But it was a desperate chance. None knew the risks better than he. It might be staking all on a single hazard. And yet, as some inner prompting told him, it was just the bold, reckless thing to do—just that sort of inspired eleventh-hour throw which might win him the game.

Guido, pointing back there on the map, with shaking finger, to where Blasco's chateau lay in the valley on the other side of the mountains, had advised a wide *détour* seaward to avoid a mist-enshrouded, perilous passage amid grim pinnacles which jutted skyward like great pointed teeth.

Frank took one lingering glance at his map and, hand firm on the elevator-lever, sent that swift-winged steed of his up and up till, driving meteor-like into a great fleecy cloud-bank, he seemed as though he were rushing through some vast, impalpable void.

Now his eyes never left the height-recorder. Up, in great leaps of a thousand feet and more at a time, he climbed through the sky. Mists, cold and clammy, and taking the strangest shapes, seemed to sweep menacingly upon him; only to part and vanish as his great machine flashed dauntlessly on.

Up, still up! A hurried glance, stolen from the altimeter, told him from map and clock that now he must, at the speed he was moving, be nearly midway over a vast ravine, with lean, cruel fangs on either

for safety as the great grim machine shot out.

side, which he had set his compass-course to traverse.

But was his unseen steering accurate? Might not he be rushing, unknown, to a frightful, pell-mell impact with some sky-pointing peak of rock? Here was the peril, and Frank, crouching low in his driving-seat, peered intently through his windscreen as icy billows of cloud eddied round him. Teeth clenched, nerves taut, ready on an instant to swing his speed-craft right or left, he was feeling safer as each crucial moment sped by when, with a sudden choking splutter that struck terror to his inmost heart, his great engine mis-fired and, almost before he could realize what had happened, or what it meant, had stopped altogether.

Instinctively, as he dipped his bow downward into the gradually descending glide which was now his only course, Frank shot a glance at his instrument-board and saw the cause of the disaster. His fuel-tanks had run suddenly dry. That great engine had stopped, in full flight, because the petrol which was its life had become exhausted.

It was such a moment, that, as the stoutest-hearted flying man envisages with a little chill of fear. Engine-power gone! Nothing to do but come sweeping down like a wounded bird; and below and around, hidden treacherously, those mountain-peaks.

But Frank, facing this supreme ordeal, was as calm as though he might have been seated in his little office on the aerodrome. Automatically, fine training never failing him, he did precisely the right thing at the right moment, and that great craft, its loud-voiced motor struck to silence, came planing downward, with nothing audible about it, now,

save the whistling of wind through its wires.

There was just one hope. Could he, by prolonging to its utmost his gravity-compelled glide, escape the perils of the mountains and reach that valley beyond? Frank thought of this now, and nothing else. Every art he used, groping through baffling cloud wreaths, to hold that machine on its finest and flattest glide. For a moment he saw something dark below him. The next it vanished. Trees, perched apparently on some great, sharply-sloping ridge, flashed suddenly past him, glimpsed just for a second from the corner of his eye.

And then, suddenly, unexpectedly—strange music to cause him such a thrill—he heard above the silence of his own machine the distant droning of an aero-engine.

Thoughts rising in a tumult to his brain, he dipped his glide more downward, listening acutely. Yes, by Jove! There was no mistaking that! It was a motor—a big, high-powered motor—and whoever sat behind it was switching it on and off.

What could that mean? Why, one thing only! Whoever was driving that machine, hidden there beyond the cloud-screen, was on the point of alighting.

And, even as he braced himself for he knew not what, Frank shot suddenly into what, to his mist-strained eyes, seemed like a new world.

For with a final downward rush his craft had cleaved its way to the limit of those mountain cloud-banks, and now, passing in a trice from chilly gloom to warm, mellow, evening sunlight, he saw a fair, quiet valley stretching beneath him, and an old, half-ruined building outlined a thousand feet or so below against a dark, close-set grove of trees.

The lie of that bit of land, though he had peered at it only with Guido on an outstretched map, and had never seen it before save in his mind's eye, was, none the less, too printed on his brain for him to have a moment's doubt; but, even as a wave of wonder at his almost incredible luck surged through Frank's thoughts, his eyes as he craned forward caught something that, in a flash, swept all else from his mind.

Just below him there, a trifle to his right, perhaps half-way between him and the ground, was a diving aeroplane that shot black puffs of smoke from its exhaust as its pilot switched on and off to manœuvre his descent.

It wanted but one more piercing glance and Frank—who knew an aeroplane, when once he had seen it, as an equine sportsman knows a horse—felt that he could not mistrust his eyes, miraculous almost as this swoop from the cloud-veil had seemed to him.

It was, without a vestige of a doubt, Blasco's famous black-painted greyhound of the air!

And from this crucial moment—like breakneck thrills on some speeded film—things happened so quickly that words must race, too, if they are to keep pace with them.

BLASCO, a tired man after his tremendous flight, his faculties a little dulled, planed down abruptly to the open space he knew so well—unconscious, utterly, of that silent, pursuing shape just there behind him in the sky.

Roughly, rather clumsily, as though endurance had reached its limit, he brought that black craft of his to earth. Stiffly, as though aching with fatigue, he raised himself from his cockpit and clambered to the ground. And then, animation re-kindling in his eyes, he swung to the tiny forward compartment, and lifted out, drug-dazed still and oblivious of all around her, the limp, slim form of Gladys Manders.

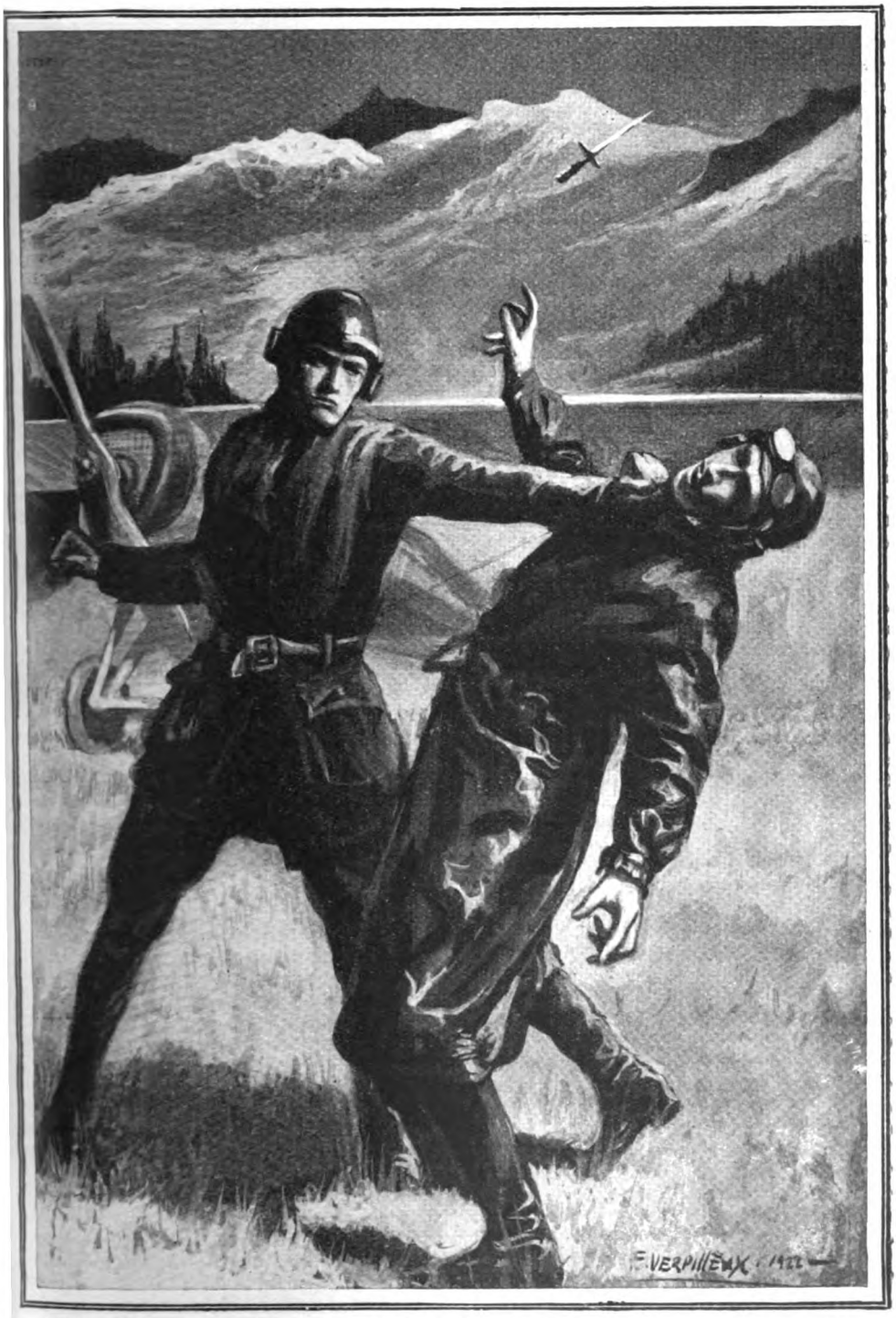
Even, though, as he stood with her in his arms, something—the faint wail of the evening breeze in the wires of Frank's machine, stealing down, now, with its rubber-tyred wheels just skimming the turf—caused him to glance sharply over his shoulder. And at that glance, galvanized as though by an electric shock, all the tiredness vanished from the Spaniard's mien. His teeth bared themselves beneath his black moustache in a curse of sheer amazement. Then, as with one deft movement he deposited his graceful burden on the turf, with another he fumbled furiously at a pocket inside his flying coat.

Frank, instantly he felt his wheels touch ground, had but one burning impulse. Unarmed—going off, as he had, pell-mell in his pursuit—he saw that his best chance lay in the sheer paralysing surprise of his onslaught.

So, even before his swaying 'plane had come to a standstill, he shot down and, like some hound that sights its quarry, launched himself at a run across the narrow stretch of turf which divided him from Blasco.

But the latter, shaken man though he was by this seeming miracle of a pursuer appearing from the clouds, was not called "steel-nerved" for nothing.

Before Frank, fleet-footed though he was, could cover half that critical gap, his hand had swung forth from that inner pocket, and in it he held an automatic pistol. Face mask-like with hate and rage, eyes peering through narrowed lids, he raised his weapon and fired swiftly—once, twice, thrice!



With all the weight of his big body behind it, Frank shot a clean, straight, terrible left to the point of Blasco's jaw.

By instinct, as he leapt, Frank ducked his head. Two of those hissing messengers of death flashed past him, and then, violently, he felt a hammer-like blow above his eyes, and, stumbling, fell full length upon the turf.

But even as he went down that strong clear brain of his—keyed as it was to its highest pitch—told him what had happened. The Spaniard's third bullet, striking the centre protecting bar of Frank's helmet as he had bent his head forward, had dealt him almost a knock-out blow, but had then glanced harmlessly off the strip of steel that lay beneath the leather.

Sprawling, helpless, as this explanation came to him, Frank nerved himself to one supreme, heroic move. It was a thought, a trick, worthy of a player of vital hazards, as he had been even before air-sportsmen called him "king." For instead of scrambling up again, to make himself a target for another deadly shot, he steeled his nerves, by one tremendous effort of will, to lie there supine, just as he had dropped, like a man struck down by a mortal wound.

Life or death, and something more—for not only his fate, but also that, agonizingly precious to him, of the girl he loved—hung there in the balance as Frank lay prone upon the turf.

For an instant, with cruel eyes narrowing still further, the Spaniard stood, pistol in hand, like an ill-omened statue. Then slowly he raised his weapon again as though to fire, and Frank—peering from behind the shelter of an outflung arm—felt as though his heart must burst; as though a great cry, despite his iron repression, must come tearing from his lips.

A couple of seconds passed that seemed eternity. Then the Spaniard, uttering a low callous laugh, as he eyed the prostrate figure on the turf before him, let his pistol-arm fall gradually, and moved with leisurely, insolent triumph towards where Frank lay.

The latter—his whole being focused in eyes and ears—drew taut that big, strong body of his till it was like a coiled spring.

Step by step, an evil sneer on his handsome face, the Spaniard came; and no sound, save the rustle of his feet in the grass, broke the silence of that lonely valley.

One, two, three—Frank was counting those footsteps now; four, five—and then, like a crouched tiger, Frank launched himself, hand shooting forth to grip the other's ankle.

He just reached his goal, though the Spaniard, recoiling convulsively with a hoarse cry, managed almost to leap beyond reach. Then, however, his ankle in Frank's iron grip, he reeled and, the pistol flying from his hand, fell backwards with a crash.

But with an agility which was extraordinary, and with an eel-like twist of his long sinewy frame, he shook himself clear and was on his feet again. With a curse, he realized the loss of his pistol. Then, his eyes devilish in their hate, he tore out from within his padded coat a thin, gleaming, murderous stiletto.

BUT he never used that weapon. Frank was taking no chances now. On his feet, too, with a lithe spring, eyes glinting fire, he lunged in and, with all the weight of his big body behind it, shot a clean, straight, terrible left to the point of Blasco's jaw.

Like some puppet figure which collapses suddenly, with a broken spring, the Spaniard slipped sideways and backwards, and crumpled up inertly at Frank's feet.

For an instant, his shoulders heaving as he drew gasping breaths, Frank surveyed that sprawled-out figure.

Then—man of action always—he muttered quickly:—

"We'll take no more risks with you, my precious scoundrel."

Whereupon, with the speed almost of a conjuring trick, he fetched from his aeroplane a length of rope, and, passing coil after coil round the Spaniard's limp, unresisting form, bound him till he was helpless as a mummy.

Just as he was tying his final knots—a grimly-satisfied smile on his tired face—Frank started and turned quickly as he heard a little low moan from near Blasco's machine.

Then, in a flash, he was on his feet, and running to where Gladys Manders lay.

She was recovering consciousness, mistily; and for a moment, as she saw a tall form bending over her, those clouded eyes of hers took on a look of terror.

Then, though with an effort, she forced the drug-film from her brain. Her gaze cleared. Her eyes rested, in a swift, glad, trustful recognition, on Frank's solicitous face. Then, quite content, as though no further perils could assail her, she settled herself in his sheltering arms and closed her eyes once more.

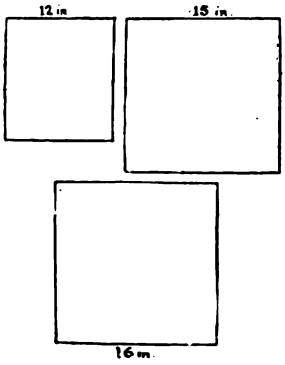
And Frank, thrilled to the very core by that sweet surrender, holding there his loved one in his arms, felt such a heart-swelling triumph as—despite all his famous victories as aerial "king"—he has never experienced either before or since.

PERPLEXITIES.

By HENRY E. DUDENEY.

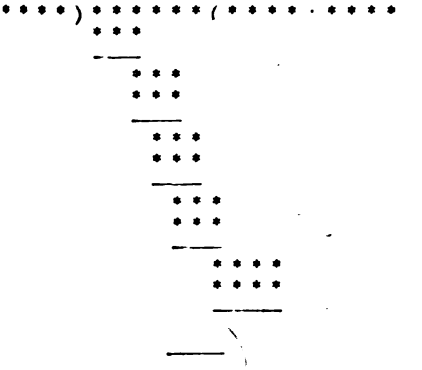
640.—THE SQUARE TABLE-TOP.

A MAN had three pieces of beautiful wood, measuring 12in., 15in., and 16in. square respectively. He wanted to cut these into the fewest pieces possible that would fit together and form a small square table-top 25 by 25 inches. How was he to do it? I have found several easy solutions in six pieces, very pretty, but have failed to do it in five pieces. Perhaps the latter is not possible. I know it will interest my readers to examine the question.



641.—A COMPLETE SKELETON.

READERS seem to have found "The Solitary Seven" (No. 627) exceptionally interesting, and many correspondents have asked for more puzzles on the same lines. I will here remark that many attempts sent to me were wrong, because they either suppressed asterisks or required the insertion of new ones. Such a proceeding, if allowed, would destroy any puzzle. Here is an arrangement without any figure at all, constructed by Mr. A. Corrigan. Note the decimal dot in the quotient. The extension to four places of decimals makes it curiously easy to solve.



642.—A WORD SQUARE.

THE traveller, *fifth* and footsore, struggled on,
Sustained by *second* of dear home and kin.
He paused to rest awhile but on was *fourth*
By hunger's pangs and thoughts that surged within
His feverish brain. At length he drooping sank
A *first* song, ringing sweetly in his ears,
Bids him to *third* no more, but come and rest
In the undying bliss of happier spheres.

643.—BAXTER'S DOG.

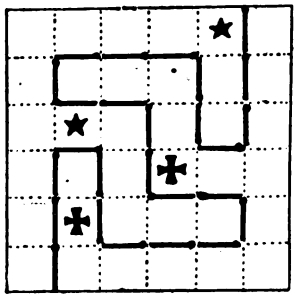
THIS is an interesting companion to the "Man and Dog" puzzle I gave in July, 1919 (No. 464). Anderson set off from an hotel at San Remo at 9 o'clock and had been walking an hour when Baxter went after him along the same road. Baxter's dog started at the same time as his master and ran uniformly forwards and backwards between him and Anderson until the two men were together. Anderson's speed is two, Baxter's four, and the dog's ten miles an hour. How far had the dog run when Baxter overtook Anderson? My correspondent in Italy who sends me this is an exact man and he says, "Neglect length of dog and time spent in turning." I will merely add, neglect also the dog's name and the day of the month. If you pass over this as too difficult you will kick yourself when you see the answer.

644.—WRONG TO RIGHT.

THE little puzzle game of transforming one word into another by changing one letter at a time, without altering the positions of the other letters, and forming a good word at each step (like CAT, COT, COG, DOG), was invented by Lewis Carroll about 1878, and called by him "Doublets." He published a large number of examples, such as WINTER to SUMMER, WHEAT to BREAD, BLACK to WHITE, and ROUGE to CHEEK, but I cannot remember that he ever did WRONG to RIGHT. It is not a very easy case, and I invite my readers to have a try at it. We will allow in this case the use of a proper noun and the apostrophe. Of course, a point is always to use the fewest possible links.

Solutions to Last Month's Puzzles.

635.—TWENTY-SIX MATCHES.



THE illustration shows how the twenty-six matches may be placed so that the square is divided into two parts of exactly the same size and shape, one part containing two stars and the other two crosses.

636.—PUZZLING LEGACIES.

As most readers will have guessed, "the daughter's share *divided* by 2" was a misprint for "*multiplied* by 2." The answer was then £1,464—a little less than £1,500. But as it stands the answer is £780—considerably less than £1,500. In the former case the lawyer's fee would be £6; in the latter case £5.

637.—A MAGIC SQUARE TRICK.

$7\frac{1}{2}$	5	$2\frac{1}{2}$
0	5	10
$7\frac{1}{2}$	5	$2\frac{1}{2}$

$\frac{8\times 8-8}{8}+\frac{8}{8+8}$	$1+1+1+1+1$	$\frac{6+6}{6}\ \frac{6}{6+6}$
$3-3$	5	$\frac{7\times 7+7+7}{7}$
$\frac{4\times 4+4+4+4}{4}+\frac{4}{4+4}$	$\frac{9+9+9+9+9}{9}$	$2+\frac{2}{2+2}$

THOUGH the figures in each cell must be different in every case it is not required that the *numbers* shall be different. In our smaller square the rows of cells add to 15 in ten different directions, for in addition to the rows, columns, and two long diagonals, two of the short diagonals also add to 15. This is the greatest number of directions possible. Now, all we have to do is to express each number with a different figure by repeating it with arithmetical signs. The larger square shows how this may be done. All the conditions of the puzzle are thus complied with and the maximum ten directions obtained.

638.—A PICTURE PRESENTATION.

MULTIPLY together as many 2's as there are pictures and deduct 1. Thus 2 raised to the 10th power is 1,024, and deducting 1 we get 1,023 as the correct answer. Suppose there had been only 3 pictures. Then one can be selected in 3 ways, two in 3 ways, and three in 1 way, making together 7 ways, which is the same as the cube of 2 less 1.

639.—MISSING WORDS.

THE words in their order are TAELS, TEALS, LEATS, SLATE, ASTEL, STEAL, TALES, STAEL, STALE, LEAST, TESLA.

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT.

Next month's issue of "The Strand Magazine" will contain a long opening instalment of a splendid serial by

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This new story by the world's most popular woman novelist will be found fully as enthralling as any of the fascinating romances which have given her such a world-wide reputation.

In the same number will also appear the first of a thrilling new series by

E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM

entitled "The Terrible Hobby of Sir Joseph Londe, Bart.,"

and

another highly diverting story of the inimitable Jeeves by

P. G. WODEHOUSE

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BY

P. G. WODEHOUSE

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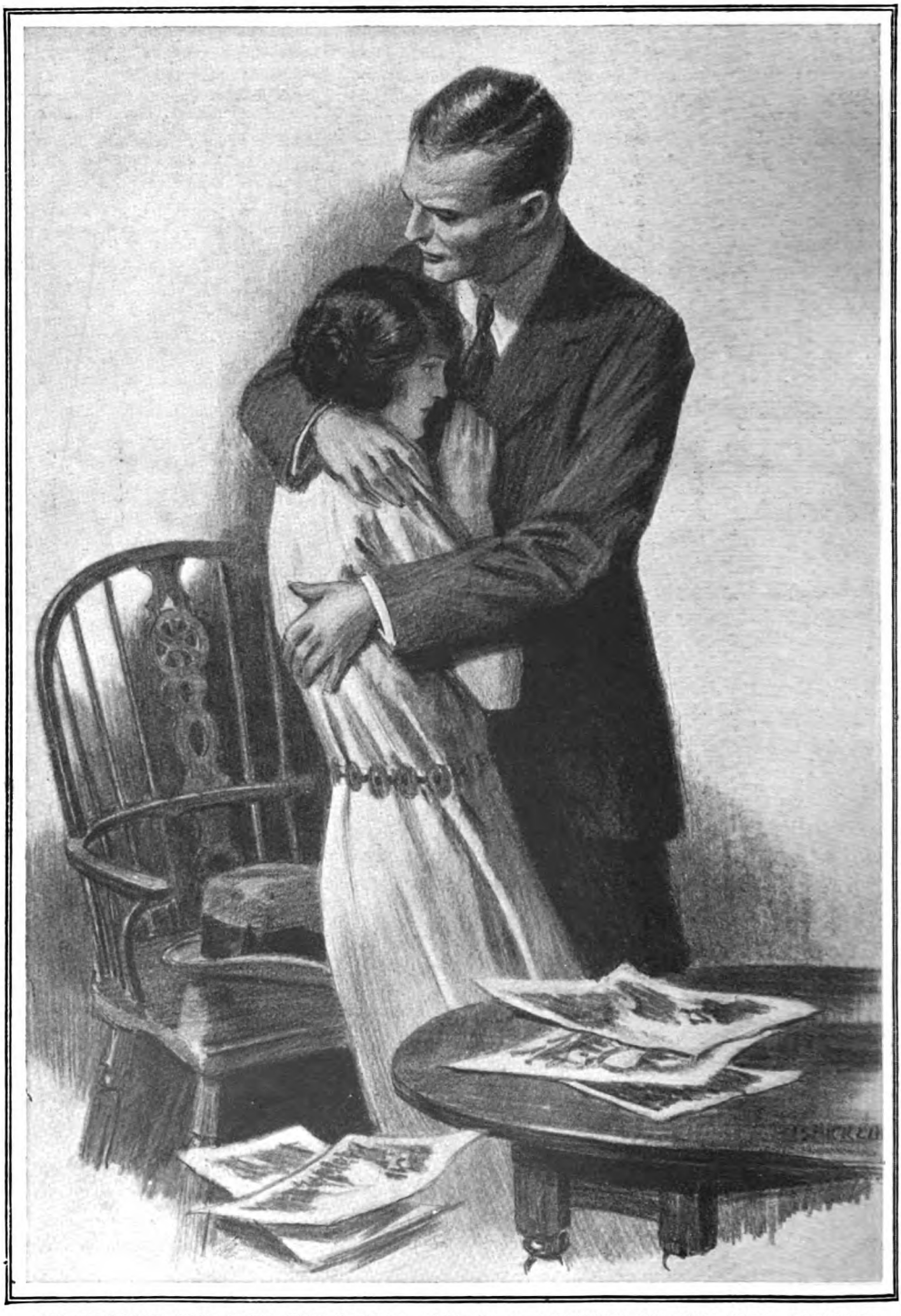

HE CAUGHT THE SLIM SHOULDERS, AND IN A MOMENT HE HAD HER AGAINST HIS BREAST. THAT HE SHOULD LOVE HER—AH, THE MARVEL OF IT—AND THE GLADNESS THAT WAS LIKE TO PAIN!

(See page 339.)

TETHERSTONES

by

ETHEL M. DELL

ILLUSTRATED BY
P. B. HICKLING

PART I.

CHAPTER I.

THE MACHINE.

TWELVE deep notes sounded from the clock-tower of the cathedral, and the Bishop's secretary dropped her hands from her typewriter and turned her face to the open window with a quick sigh. The Bishop's garden lay sleeping in the sunshine—the pure white of lilies and royal blue of delphiniums mingling together as the wrought silks on the fringe of an altar-cloth. The age-worn stone of the cathedral rose beyond it, and the arch of the cloisters gave a glimpse of the quiet burial-ground within. A great cluster of purple stonecrop rioted over one corner of the arch, and the secretary's tired eyes rested upon it with a touch of wistfulness, as though the splendour of it were somewhat overwhelming. She herself was so slight, so insignificant, so altogether negligible a quantity, a being wholly out of place in the midst of such glorious surroundings. But yet she loved them, and her happiest hours were those she spent with her little sketching-block in various corners of that wonderful garden. It was only that the purple flower seemed somehow to be the symbol to her of all that was out of reach. Her youth was slipping from her, and she had never lived.

The tired lines about the brown eyes were growing daily more marked. The little tender curve about the lips was becoming a droop. The brown hair that grew so softly about her forehead gleamed unexpectedly white here and there.

"Yes, I'm getting old," said Frances Thorold. "Old and tired and dull." She stretched up her arms with a sudden movement, and for a second her hands were clenched. Then they fell to her sides.

"I suppose we are all slaves," she said, "of one kind or another. But only the rebels know it."

She turned again to her work, and for a space only the sharp click of the machine disturbed the summer silence. It had an unmistakably indignant sound, as though its manipulator were out of sympathy with the words so deftly printed on the white page. The secretary's mouth became very firm as she proceeded, the brown eyes narrowed and grew hard.

Suddenly she uttered an impatient exclamation and looked up. "Oh, these platitudes!" she said. "How are they going to help men and women to live?"

For a moment she had almost a desperate look, and then abruptly she laughed.

"Perhaps it isn't all your fault," she said to the manuscript by her side, "that you give us stones for bread. You have lived on them all your life and don't know the difference."

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"How do you know?" said a voice at the window.

The secretary gave a start. Her eyes met the eyes of a man who stood against the clematis-covered window-frame looking in upon her—a careless, lounging figure as supremely at ease as a cat stretched in the sunshine.

He marked her brief confusion with a smile. "Do tell me how you know!" he said.

Her eyes fenced with his for a moment, then were proudly lowered. It was as if she drew a veil over her face.

"His lordship is not here," she remarked, in a tone that was strictly official.

"So I have already observed," rejoined the new-comer, with his easy tolerance that was somehow quite distinct from familiarity. "In fact, at the present moment, I believe his lordship is in the thick of an argument with the Dean as to whether Shakespeare or Bacon wrote the Bible. It's rather an important point, you know. Have you any theories on the subject, might one ask?"

A little quiver that could hardly be described as a smile passed over the secretary's thin features, but her eyes remained upon her work.

"I don't go in for theories," she said, "or arguments. I am far too busy."

"By Jove!" he commented. "How you hate it!"

She raised her brows very slightly—delicate brows, one of them a shade more tilted than the other, giving a quaint look of humour to a face that seldom smiled.

"I hate nothing," she said, with precision. "I have no time."

"By Jove!" he said again, and chuckled as at some hidden joke.

The exasperating click of the typewriter put an end to all discussion, but it did not dislodge the intruder, as was obviously intended. He merely propped himself against the grey stonework of the window and took out his cigarette-case. His eyes dwelt with artistic appreciation upon the stately glories of the old garden, the arch of the cloisters against the summer blue, the wealth of purple flower adorning it. His face had the lines and the weather-tan of the man who has travelled far and wide, has looked upon the wonders of life and death with a certain cynical amusement, and returned almost to the starting-point with very little of value in his pack.

As the click of the typewriter persisted, he turned from his deliberate survey and gave his attention to a calm study of the woman seated behind it. His gaze was speculative, faintly humorous. There was something in that face of passive severity that aroused his curiosity. An insignificant type, it was true; but behind the insignificance there lurked something unusual that drew his interest. He wondered how long she would manage to ignore him.

On and on clicked the typewriter. The typist's lips were firmly closed, her eyes resolutely fixed upon her work. The watcher summoned his own resolution to wait upon opportunity, meditatively smoking the while.

OPPORTUNITY came at the end of some minutes of persistent clicking that might well have exasperated the most patient. The end of the page was reached, and there came a check. The secretary reached a thin, nervous hand for another sheet.

"Still more platitudes?" queried the man who leaned against the window-frame.

It would not have greatly surprised him had she made no response, but the sudden flashing upwards of her eyes came as a revelation. He straightened himself, almost as if he expected a blow. "I am sorry," said the secretary, very evenly, her eyes unswervingly upon him, "but you are disturbing me. I must ask you to go away."

He stood looking at her in frank astonishment. No woman had ever made him so simple and so compelling a request before. This from the secretary, the insignificant adjunct, the wholly undesirable and unknown etcetera of his uncle's household! There certainly was more here than met the eye!

He collected himself with an unwonted feeling of being at a disadvantage, and instantly determined to save the situation at all costs. He leaned towards her, meeting the grave insistence of her look with a disarming smile. "Miss—Thorold, I haven't offended you?"

"No," said Frances Thorold, briefly. "I am busy, that's all."

Her tone was official rather than ungracious, her eyes questioning rather than hostile, her whole attitude too impersonal for resentment. And yet it aroused resentment in the man. His smile vanished.

"I am sorry," he said, stiffly, "to have appeared intrusive. That was not my intention. I only spoke to you because I heard your voice and imagined the hour for recreation had arrived. Pray accept my apologies!"

The firm lips relaxed a little, and a short sigh came through them. "There is no need for apology," she said. "No one apologizes to—a machine. But it has got to keep working, and it mustn't be interrupted."

"You can't work all day!" he protested.

She nodded. "I can. I do. And why not? It's what I'm here for."

Her voice had a note of challenge. Her

"I am sorry," she said, "but you are disturbing me. I must ask you to go away."

eyes had gone beyond him. They rested upon the wealth of purple flower that crowned the coping of the cloister-arch in the hot sunshine, and again they held that wistful look as of baffled longing for the unattainable.

The man's eyes were upon her. They saw the longing. His anger passed.

"No machine will go for ever," he said, "if left to itself. The very best of them need occasional rest for adjustment and lubrication. Otherwise they run down and wear out before their time."

He was aware of the gleam of appreciation that crossed her intent face, and for the first time he marked the weary lines about her eyes. Then he met them again, and knew that he had scored a point.

She spoke in her brisk, official voice, returning to her work. "No doubt you are right. I shall have to oil it one of these days—when I have time."

"I shouldn't leave it too long," he said.

"Take an engineer's advice! It's poor economy—may lead to a breakdown in the end."

She adjusted the fresh page with deft care. "Thank you, Mr. Rotherby. I shall remember your advice."

"And take it?" suggested Rotherby. Then, as she did not reply, "It may be dry bread, but it's better than stones, anyway."

He got what he angled for. She threw him a fleeting smile, and in a moment he caught the charm which up till then had eluded him.

It faded almost instantly as a picture fades from a screen. Only the official mask remained. Yet as he turned to depart, the gleam of satisfaction lingered in his eyes. He had made his small bid for amusement, and he had not bid in vain.

The monotonous clicking of the typewriter continued through the summer silence as the secretary pursued her task with erect head and compressed lips. With machine-like precision she tapped out the long, learned sentences, reading them mechanically, transmitting them with well-trained accuracy, aloof, uncritical, uninterested. She did not lift her eyes from her work again for a full hour.

Page after page was covered and laid aside. The cathedral clock chimed and struck again. Then, in a quarter of an hour, there came the booming of a heavy gong through the house. Frances Thorold finished her sentence and ceased to work.

Her hands fell upon her lap, and for the moment her whole frame relaxed. She sat inert, as one utterly exhausted, her eyes closed, her head bowed.

Then, very sharply, as though at a word of rebuke, she straightened herself and began to set in order the fruits of her morning's work. She had laboured for five hours without a break, save for the brief interlude of Montague Rotherby's interruption.

At the opening of the door she rose to her feet, but continued her task without turning. The Bishop of Burminster had a well-known objection to any forms of deference from inferiors. He expressed it now as he came forward to the table at which she had worked for so long.

"Why do you rise, Miss Thorold? Pray continue your task! You waste time by these observances."

She straightened the last page and made quiet reply. "I think I have finished my task for this morning, my lord. In any case, it is luncheon-time."

"You have finished?" He took up the pile of typescript with eagerness, but in a moment tossed it down again with exasperation. "You call that finished!"

"For this morning," repeated Frances Thorold, in her quiet, unmoved voice. "It is a lengthy and a difficult piece of work. But I hope to finish it to-night."

"It must be finished to-night," said the Bishop, with decision. "It is essential that it should be handed to me for revision by nine o'clock. Kindly make a note of this, Miss Thorold! I must say I am disappointed by your rate of progress. I had hoped that work so purely mechanical would have taken far less time."

He spoke with curt impatience, but no shade of feeling showed upon his secretary's face. She said nothing whatever in reply.

The Bishop, lean, ascetic, forbidding of aspect, pulled at his clean-shaven chin with an irritable gesture. He had a bundle of letters in his hand, which he slapped down upon the table before her.

"I had hoped for better things," he said. "There are these to be answered, and when is time to be found for them if your whole day is to be occupied in the typing of my treatise—a very simple piece of work, mere rough copy, after all, which will have to be done again from beginning to end after my revision?"

"I will take your notes upon those this afternoon," said Frances. "I will have them ready for your signature in time to catch the midnight post."

"Absurd!" said the Bishop. "They must go before then."

She heard him without dismay. "Then I will do them first, and type the rest of the treatise afterwards," she said.

He made a sound of impatience. "A highly unsatisfactory method of procedure. I am afraid I cannot compliment you upon the business-like way in which you execute your duties."

He did not expect a reply to this, but as if out of space it came.

"Yet I execute them," said Frances Thorold, steadily and respectfully.

He looked at her sharply, his cold blue eyes drawn to keen attention. "With very indifferent success," he commented. "Pray remember that, Miss Thorold, should the position you occupy ever tempt you to feel uplifted!"

She made no answer, and her face of utter passivity revealed nothing to his unsparing scrutiny. He passed the matter by as unworthy of further consideration. If any impertinence had been intended, he had quelled it at the outset. He did not ask for deference from his subordinates, but he demanded—and he obtained—implicit submission. He had a gift for exacting this.

regarding everyone whom he employed as a mere puppet made to respond to the pulling of a string. If at any time the puppet failed to respond, it was thrown aside immediately as worthless. He was a man who had but one aim and object in life, and this he followed with untiring and wholly ruthless persistence. Before all things he desired, and so far as his powers permitted he meant to achieve, the establishment of the Church as a paramount and enduring force above all other forces. With the fervour and the self-abnegation of a Jesuit, he followed unswervingly this one great idea, trampling down all lesser things, serving only the one imperative need. It was his idol, his fetish—this dream of power, and he worshipped it blindly, not realizing that the temple he sought to erect was already dedicated to personal ambition rather than to the glory of God.

He worked unceasingly, with crude, fanatical endeavour—a man born out of his generation, belonging to a sterner age, and curiously at variance with the world in which he lived.

To him Frances Thorold was only a small cog-wheel of that machine which he was striving to drive for the accomplishment of his ends. The failure of such a minute portion of mechanism was of small importance to him. She had her uses, undoubtedly, but she could be replaced at almost any moment. She suited his purpose perhaps a shade better than most, but another could be very quickly fitted to the same end. He was an adept at moulding and bending the various portions of his machine to his will. Not one of them ever withstood him for long.

The rosy-faced Dean, with his funny Shakespearean hobby-horse, was as putty in his hands, and it never struck him that that same pink-cheeked curiosity was a tool infinitely more fit for the Master's use than he himself could ever be. Neither did he ever dream of the fiery scorn that burned so deeply in his secretary's silent soul as she bent herself to the burden he daily laid upon her. It would not have interested him had he known. The welfare of the dogs under the table had never been any concern of the Bishop of Burminster. They were lucky to eat of the crumbs.

And so he passed her by as unworthy of notice, merely glancing through her script and curtly noting a fault here and there, finally tossing the pages down and turning from her with a brief, "You will lunch with me, but pray be as speedy as possible, and return to your work as soon as you have finished."

That was his method of exacting the utmost from her. Under those hard blue eyes she would spend no more than the allotted half-hour out of the office chair.

And the sun still shone upon that garden of dreams, while the bees hummed lazily among the blue and purple flowers. And all was peace and beauty—save for the fierce fanaticism in the man's heart, and the bitter, smouldering resentment in the woman's.

CHAPTER II.

THE BREAKDOWN.

FOUR people sat at the old oak table in the oak-raftered dining-room of the Bishop's Palace that day, and no greater contrast than they presented could well have existed among beings of the same race.

Dr. Rotherby—the Bishop—sat in preoccupied silence, scanning an ecclesiastical paper while he ate. He never encouraged conversation at any meal save dinner, and his sister, Miss Rotherby, nervous, pinched, and dyspeptic, supported him dutifully in this as in every other whim. She sat with her knitting on the table beside her ready to be picked up at every spare moment, on the principle that every second was of value—a short-sighted, unimaginative woman whose whole attention was concentrated upon the accomplishment of her own salvation.

Montague Rotherby, the sunburnt man of travel, sat between the two, and wondered what he was doing there. He had just wandered home from an expedition in Central Africa, and he had come hither with the half-formed intention of writing a book on his experiences. He wanted peace and quiet for the purpose, and these surroundings had seemed ideal. The Bishop and his sister had given him welcome, and he had believed himself to be fulfilling a family duty by visiting them. But he had begun already to realize that there was something very vital lacking in the atmosphere of the Palace. The place was stiff with orthodoxy, and he himself as much a stranger as he had ever been in the most desert corner of his travels.

"Can't stand this much longer," was his thought, as he sat before the polished board on this the fourth day of his sojourn.

And then his look fell upon the secretary seated opposite to him, and his interest stirred again.

She sat, remote and silent, in the shadow of a heavy green curtain, against which the pallor of her face took a ghastly hue. Her eyes were downcast, the brows above them slightly drawn, conveying somehow an impression of mute endurance to the observant onlooker. He watched her narrowly,

having nothing else to occupy him, and the impression steadily grew as the meal proceeded. She scarcely touched the food before her, remaining almost statuesque in her immobility, had her obvious insignificance not precluded so stately a term. To the man who watched her, her attitude expressed more than mere passivity. She was a figure of tragedy, and as it were in spite of itself his careless soul was moved to an unwonted compassion. In silence he awaited developments.

They came, more swiftly than even he anticipated. Very suddenly the Bishop looked up from his paper.

"Miss Thorold, you have work to do. I beg you will not linger here if you have finished."

His voice came with the rasp of authority through the sultry summer quiet. The secretary started as if at the piercing of a nerve, and instantly rose to leave the table. She pushed in her chair methodically, but oddly at that point her intention seemed to fail her. She stood swaying as one stricken with a curious uncertainty, gazing straight upwards with dazed eyes that ever travelled farther and farther back, as if they marked the flight of an invisible bird.

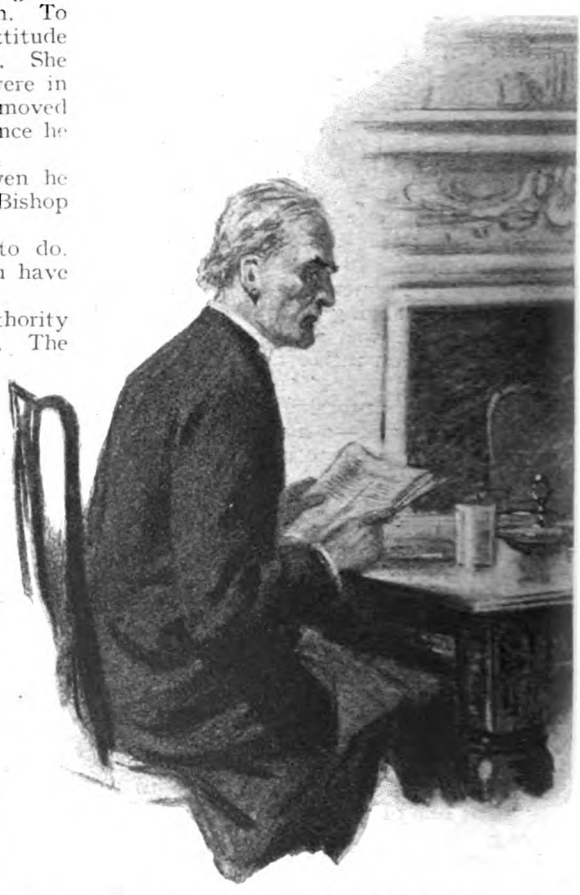
Rotherby sprang to his feet, but he was too late. Even as he did so she threw up her hands like a baffled swimmer and fell straight backwards on the polished floor. The sound of her fall mingled with the furious exclamation that leapt to Rotherby's lips—an exclamation which he certainly would not have uttered in a more reasoned moment—and he was round the table and by her side almost before the two other spectators had realized what was taking place.

"Oh, good gracious!" gasped the Bishop's sister, pushing back her chair with the gesture of one seeking to avoid contact with something obnoxious. "What is it? What is the matter?"

"It is only a faint." Curt and contemptuous came the Bishop's reply. He also pushed back his chair and rose, but with considerably more of annoyance than agitation. "Lay her in that chair, Montague! She will soon recover. She is only overcome by the heat."

"Overcome!" growled Montague, and he said it between his teeth. In that moment, cool man of the world though he was, he was angry, even furious, for the white face with its parted, colourless lips somehow excited more than pity. "She's worn out—driven to death by that accursed typewriting. Why, she's nothing but skin and bone!"

He raised the slight, inert figure with the words, holding it propped against his knee while with one hand on the dark head he



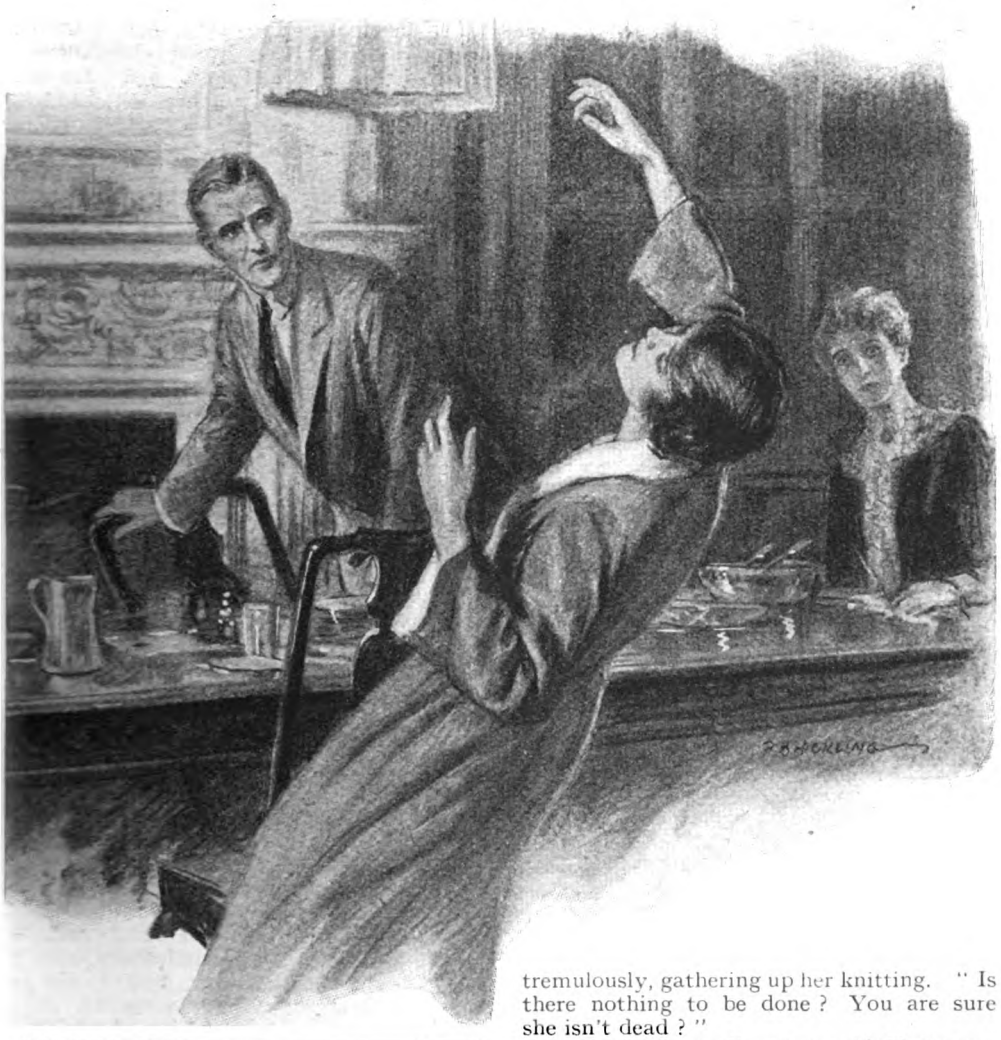
pressed it forward. It was a device which he had not thought would fail, but it had no effect upon the unconscious secretary, and a sharp misgiving went through him as he realized the futility of his efforts.

He flung a brief command upwards, instinctively assuming the responsibility. "Get some brandy—quick!"

"There is no brandy in the house," said the Bishop. "But this is nothing. It will pass. Have you never seen a woman faint before?"

"Damnation!" flared forth Montague. "Do you want her to die on your hands? There is brandy in a flask in my room. Send one of the servants for it!"

"This is dreadful!" wailed Miss Rotherby, hysterically. "I haven't so much as a bottle of smelling salts in the place! She has never behaved in this extraordinary way before. What can be the matter?"



Rotherby sprang to his feet, but he was too late. Even as he did so she threw up her hands and fell backwards.

"Don't be foolish!" said the Bishop, and firmly rang the bell. "She will be herself again in five minutes. If not, we will have a doctor."

"Better send for one at once," said Montague, with his fingers seeking a pulse that was almost imperceptible.

"Very well," said the Bishop, stiffly. "Perhaps it would be the wisest course. Why do you kneel there? She would be far better in a chair."

"Because I won't take the responsibility of moving her," said Montague.

"This is very painful," said Miss Rotherby, tremulously, gathering up her knitting. "Is there nothing to be done? You are sure she isn't dead?"

"I am not at all sure," said Montague. "I shouldn't stay if I were you. But get someone to bring me that brandy at once!"

He had his way, for there was about him a force that would not be denied. In moments of emergency he was accustomed to assert himself, but how it came about that when the brandy arrived the Bishop himself had gone to telephone for a doctor and the Bishop's sister had faded away altogether, lamenting her inability to be of use in so serious a crisis, even Montague could not very easily have said. He was still too angry and too anxious to take much note of anything beyond the ghastly face that rested against his arm.

Impatiently he dismissed the servant, who was inclined to hang over him with futile suggestions, and then realized with a grimace

that he was left in sole charge of a woman whom he scarcely knew who might die at any moment, if indeed she were not already dead.

"Damn it, she sha'n't!" he said to himself with grim resolution, as this thought forced itself upon him. "If these miserable worms can't do anything to save her, I will!"

And he applied himself with the dexterity of a steady nerve to the task of coaxing a spoonful of brandy between the livid lips.

He expected failure, but a slight tremor at the throat and then a convulsive attempt to swallow rewarded him. He lifted her higher, muttering words of encouragement of which he was hardly aware.

"That's all right. Stick to it! You're nearly through. It's good stuff, that. Damn it, why didn't that fool give me the water?"

"Yes, it—does—burn!" came faintly from the quivering lips.

"It won't hurt you," declared Montague, practically. "Feeling better, what? Don't move yet! Let the brandy go down first!"

Her eyelids were trembling painfully as though she sought to lift them, but could not.

"Don't try!" he advised. "You'll be all right directly."

She stirred a groping hand. "Give me —something—to hold on to!" she whispered, piteously.

He gripped the cold fingers closely in his own. "That's it. Now you'll be all right. I know this sort of game—played it myself in my time. Take it easy! Don't be in a hurry! Ah, that's better. Have a cry! Best thing you can do!"

The white throat was working again, and two tears came slowly from between the closed lids and ran down the drawn face. A sob, all the more agonizing because she strove with all her strength to suppress it, escaped her, and then another and another. She turned her face into the supporting arm with a desperate gesture.

"Do forgive me! I can't help it—I can't help it!"

"All right. It's all right," he said, and put his hand again on the dark head. "Don't keep it in! It'll do you more good than brandy."

She uttered a broken laugh in the midst of her anguish, and the man's eyes kindled a little. He liked courage.

He held her for a space while she fought for self-control, and when at length she turned her face back again he was ready with a friendly smile of approval; for he knew that her tears would be gone.

"That's right," he said. "You're better now."

"Will you help me up?" she said.

"Of course." He raised her steadily, closely watching the brown eyes, drawn with pain, that looked up to his. He saw them darken as she found her feet, and was prepared for the sudden nervous clutch of her hand on his arm.

"Don't let go of me!" she said, hurriedly.

He helped her to a chair by the French window. "Sit here till you feel better! It's a fairly cool corner. Is that all right?"

Her hand relaxed and fell. She lay back with a sigh. "Just for two minutes—not longer. I must get back to my work."

"It's that damned work that's done it," said Montague Rotherby, with unexpected force. "You'll have to go on sick leave—for this afternoon at least."

"Oh, no," said the secretary, in her voice of quiet decision. "I have no time to be ill."

ROTHERBY said no more, but after a pause he brought her a glass of water. She thanked him and drank, but the drawn look remained in her eyes and she moved as if afraid to turn her head.

He watched her narrowly. "You'll have a bad breakdown if you don't take a rest," he said.

She smiled faintly. "Oh, no. I shall be all right. It's just—the heat."

"It's nothing of the kind," he returned. "It's overwork, and you know it. You'll either kill yourself or go stark staring mad if you keep on."

She laughed again at that, and, though faint, her laughter had a ring of indomitable resolution. "Oh, indeed I shall not. I know exactly what my capabilities are. I have been unlucky to-day, but I am in reality much stronger than I seem."

He turned from her with the hint of a shrug. "No doubt you know your own business best, and, of course, I fully recognize that it is no part of mine to give advice."

"Oh, please!" she said, gently.

That was all; but spoken in a tone that brought him back to her with a sharp turn. He looked at her, and was amazed at himself because the faint smile in her tired eyes gave him a new sensation.

"Wasn't that what you meant?" he said, after a moment.

"No," she made quiet answer. "I never mean that to the people who show me kindness. It happens—much too seldom."

She spoke with a dignity that was above pathos, but none the less was he touched. It was as if she had lifted the official mask to give him a glimpse of her soul, and in that glimpse he beheld something which he certainly had not expected to see. Again,

almost against his will, was he stirred to a curious reverence.

"You must have had a pretty rotten time of it," he said.

To which she made no reply, though in her silence he found no sign of ungraciousness and was more attracted than repelled thereby.

He remained beside her without speaking until the irritable, uneven tread of feet in the corridor warned them of the Bishop's return; then again he looked at her and found her eyes upon him.

"Thank you very much for all your kindness," she said. "Please—will you go now?"

"You wish it?" he said.

"Yes." Just the one word, spoken with absolute simplicity.

He lingered on the step. "I shall see you again?"

He saw her brows move upwards very slightly. "Quite possibly," she said.

He turned from her with finality. "I shall," he said, and passed out without a backward glance into the hot sunshine of the Palace garden.

He lingered on the step. "I shall see you again?" "Quite possibly," she said.

CHAPTER III.

A BUSINESS PROPOSITION.

THERE was a sheet of water in the Palace garden, fed by a bubbling spring. Cypress and old yew trees grew along its banks, and here and there the crumbling ruins of an old monastery that had once adjoined the cathedral showed ivy-covered along the path that wound beside it. It was said that the frocked figure of an ancient friar was wont to pace this path in the moonlight, but none who believed the superstition ever had the courage to verify it.

Montague Rotherby, wandering thither late that night after the rest of the household had retired, had no thought for apparitions

of any description. He was wrapt in his own meditations, and neither the beauty of the place nor its eeriness appealed to him. He was beginning to realize that he had come to the wrong quarter for the peace his soul desired. A few brief, wholly dispassionate words from his uncle's lips had made it quite clear to him that it was possible even for a man of his undeniable position in the world to outstay his welcome, and, being possessed of a considerable amount of pride, Montague needed no second hint to be gone.

But very curiously he found an inner influence at war with his resolution. He knew very well what had actuated the Bishop in giving him that very decided hint, and that very motive was now strangely urging him in the opposite direction.

To admit that he was attracted by that very insignificant and wholly unimportant person, the Bishop's secretary, was of course too preposterous for a man of his standing. The bare idea brought a cynical twist to his lips. But she had undeniably awakened his compassion—a matter for wonder, but not for repudiation. Insignificant she might be, but the dumb endurance of her had aroused his admiration. He wanted to stop and see fair play.

Pacing to and fro beside the dark water, he reviewed the situation. It was no business of his, of course, and perhaps he was a fool to suffer himself to take an interest in so comparatively slight a matter. It was not his way to waste time over the grievances of outsiders. But this woman—somehow this woman with her dark, tragic eyes had taken hold of his imagination. Scoff though he might, he could not thrust the thought of her out of his mind. Possibly her treatment of himself was one of the chief factors in her favour. For Montague Rotherby was accustomed to deference from those whom he regarded as social inferiors. It was true that he had taken her at a disadvantage that morning, but the very fact of his notice was generally enough to gain him a standing wherever he sought for one. To be held at a distance by one so obviously beneath him was a novel sensation that half-piqued and half-amused him. And she needed a champion too, yet scorned to enlist him on her side. It was wholly against her will that she had gained his sympathy. Though perfectly courteous, she had made it abundantly clear that she had no desire to be placed under any obligation to him. And mainly for that reason he was conscious of a wish to help her.

"She'll sink if I don't," he muttered to himself, and forgot to question as to what on earth it mattered to him whether she sank or swam.

THIS was the problem that vexed his soul as he paced up and down in the moonlight on that summer night, and as he walked the resolution grew up within him not to leave until he had had the chance of speech with her again. She might refuse to grant it to him, might seek to avoid him. Instinct told him that she would; but he was a man to whom opposition was as a draught of wine, and it had never been his experience to be withstood for long by a woman. It would amuse him to overcome her resistance.

So ran his thoughts, and he smiled to himself as he began to retrace his steps. In a contest such as this might prove to be, the issue was assured and could not take long of achievement; but it looked as if he might have to put a strain on the Bishop's hospitality for a few days even yet. Somehow that reflection appealed to his cynical sense of humour. It seemed then that he was to sacrifice his pride to this odd will-o'-the-wisp that had suddenly gleamed at him from the eyes of a woman in whom he really took no interest whatever—one, moreover, who would probably resent any attempt on his part to befriend her. Recalling her low words of dismissal, he decided that this attitude was far the most likely one for her to adopt, but the probability did not dismay him. A hunter of known repute, he was not easily to be diverted from his quarry, and sub-consciously he was aware of possibilities in the situation that might develop into actualities undreamed of at the commencement.

In any case he intended to satisfy himself that the possibilities no longer existed before he abandoned the quest. With no avowed end in view, he determined to follow his inclination wherever it might lead. She had given him a new sensation and—though perhaps it was not wholly a pleasant one—he desired to develop it further. To a man of his experience new sensations were scarce.

The effect of the moonlight, filtering through the boughs of the yew and striking upon the dark water, sent a thrill of artistic pleasure through his soul. He stood still to appreciate it with all the home-coming joy of the wanderer. What a picture for an artist's brush! He possessed a certain gift in that direction himself, but he had merely cultivated it as a refuge from boredom and it had never carried him very far. But to-night the romance and the beauty appealed to him with peculiar force, and he stood before it with something of reverence. Then, very softly chiming, there came the sound of the cathedral clock, followed after a solemn pause by eleven deep strokes.

He counted them mechanically till the

last one died away, then turned to retrace his steps, realizing with a shrug the lateness of the hour.

It was thus that he saw her standing in the moonlight—a slender figure, oddly girlish considering the impression she had made upon him that day, the face in profile, clear-cut, with a Madonna-like purity of outline that caught his artistic sense afresh. He realized in an instant that she was unaware of him, and stood motionless, watching her, afraid to move lest he should disturb her.

She had come to the edge of the water and was gazing up the rippling pathway that the moonlight flung from the farther shore to her feet. Her stillness had that statuesque quality that he had marked before in her, and, oddly, here in the moonlight he no longer found her insignificant. It was as if in this world of silver radiance she had mysteriously come into her own, and the man's spirit stirred within him, quickening his pulses. He wanted to call to her as one who calls to his mate.

PERHAPS some hidden telepathy warned her of his presence, perhaps she heard the call, unuttered though it was, for even as that unaccountable thrill went through him she moved, turned with a strange deliberation, and faced him. She showed no surprise, spoke no word, her silence and her passivity surrounding her as though with a magic circle which none might cross without her leave. The mantle of her unobtrusiveness had fallen from her. She stood, superbly erect, queen-like in her pose and the unconscious dignity of her aloofness.

And Montague Rotherby was actually at a loss before her, uncertain whether to go or stay. It was a very transient feeling, banished by the swift assertion of his pride; but it had been there, and later he smiled ironically over the memory of his discomfiture. He had called to her too urgently, and she had replied with instant dismissal though no word had passed between them.

Now, with determination and a certain audacity, he ignored her dismissal and took words for his weapon. With a smile he came towards her, he crossed the magic circle, protecting himself with the shield of the commonplace.

"I thought we should meet again," he said. "Are you better?"

She thrust past his shield with something of contempt. "I certainly did not expect to meet you—or anyone—here," she said.

His smile became almost a laugh. Did she think him so easily repulsed?

"No?" he said, easily. "Yet we probably came—both of us—with the same intention. Tell me what happened after I left you this afternoon! I tried to find out from his lordship, but was badly snubbed for my pains, which I think you will admit was hardly fair treatment."

He saw her face change very slightly at his words, but she made no verbal response to them.

"I am quite well again," she said, guardedly, after a moment. "Please do not trouble yourself any further about me! It is sheer waste of time."

"Oh, impossible!" he exclaimed, gallantly; then, seeing her look, "No, seriously, Miss Thorold, I refuse to be put off like that. I've no right whatever—as you have every right to point out—but I must insist upon knowing what happened. I won't rest till I know."

She looked at him for a few seconds, her dark eyes very intent as though they searched behind every word he uttered for a hidden motive; then, abruptly, with the gesture of one who submits either from indifference or of necessity, she made brief reply.

"What happened was a visit from the doctor and a solemn warning that I must take a rest as soon as his lordship can conveniently release me from my duties."

"Ah!" said Montague.

He had expected it, but somehow her method of conveying the news—though he realized it to be characteristic—took him by surprise. Perhaps, remembering that he had held her in her weakness a few hours before, whilst she had wept against his arm, he had hoped for greater intimacy in the telling. As it was, he found himself actually hesitating as to how to receive it.

She certainly did not ask for sympathy, this woman of the curt speech and tired eyes. Rather she repudiated the bare notion. Yet was he conscious of a keen desire to offer it.

He stood in silence for a moment or two, bracing himself for a distinct effort.

"Does it mean very much to you?" he asked at length.

Her short laugh grated upon him. It had the sound of a wrong chord. She had smiled at him that morning, and he had felt her charm. Her laughter should have been sheer music.

Her voice had the same hard quality as she answered him. "No more than it does to most people when they lose their livelihood, I should say."

But, strangely, her words gave him courage to pass the barrier. He spoke as one worker to another.

"What damnable luck!" he said.

Perhaps they were the most sincere words he had yet spoken, and they pierced her armour. He saw her chin quiver suddenly. She turned her face from him.

"I shall worry through," she said, and her voice was brisk and business-like, wholly free from emotion. "I'm not afraid of that."

But she was afraid, and he knew it. And something within him leapt to the knowledge. He knew that he had found the weak joint.

"Oh, there's always a way out," he said. "I've been in some tight corners myself, and I've proved that every time." He broke off, with his eyes upon the rippling pathway of moonlight that stretched to their feet. Then, as abruptly as she herself had spoken: "Is the Bishop going to do anything to make things easier?" he asked.

She made a small choking sound and produced a laugh. "Good heavens!" she said. "Do you really imagine I would let him if he would?"

"Why not?" said Montague, boldly. "You've worked hard for him. If he has any sense of what is fitting, he will regard it in the light of a debt."

"Will he?" said Frances Thorold, sardonically.

"If he hasn't the decency to do that——" said Montague.

She turned upon him in a flash, and he saw that her bosom was heaving.

"Do you think I would take his charity?" she said. "Or anyone else's? I'd rather—far rather—starve—as I have before!"

"Good God!" said Montague.

He met the fierce fire of her eyes with a swift kindling of admiration in his own. Somehow, in that moment she was magnificent. She was like a statue of Victory in the midst of defeat. Then he saw the fire die down, and marked it with regret.

"Good night," she said, abruptly. "I am going in."

He thrust out his hand to her with a quickness of impulse he did not stop to question. "Please wait a minute!" he said. "Surely you are not afraid of my offering you charity?"

He smiled as he said it—the smile of confident friendship. There were moments when Montague Rotherby, with the true gambler's spirit, staked all upon one cast. And this was one of them. But—possessing also a considerable knowledge of human nature—he had small fear for the result. He knew before he put down his stake that he was dealing with a woman of too generous a temperament to make him suffer complete failure. Also, he was too old and too cynical a player to care greatly whether he won or lost. He was beginning to admit that she attracted him. But, after all, what of it? It was only boredom that lent romance to this moonlight scene. In three days—in less—he could banish it from his mind. There were other scenes awaiting his careless coming, other players also . . . higher stakes . . .

The thought was still running in his mind even as he felt the quick grip of her slender hand in his. He had not expected complete victory. It took him by surprise.

"You are far too good," she said, and he heard the quiver of emotion that she no longer sought to suppress in her voice, "too understanding, to offer me that."

He squeezed her hand in answer. "I'm offering you friendship," he said.

"Thank you," she said, gently.

He smiled into her eyes. "It may be of an unorthodox kind, but that we can't help—in the circumstances. It's genuine, anyway."

"I'm sure of that," she said.

HE wondered what made her sure, and was conscious of a moment's discomfiture, but swiftly fortified himself with the reflection that she was no girl, and if she were still lacking in experience of the ways of the world, that was her affair, not his. On second thoughts he did not believe her to be lacking in this respect. She had shown too much caution in her treatment of his earlier advances.

He released her hand, but he stood very close to her in the shadow of the cypress tree. "And now—as a friend," he said, "will you tell me what you think of doing?"

She made no movement away from him. Possibly she had not the strength to turn away from the only human being in the world who had offered to stand by her in her hour of need. She answered him with a simplicity that must have shown him clearly how completely she had banished all doubt.

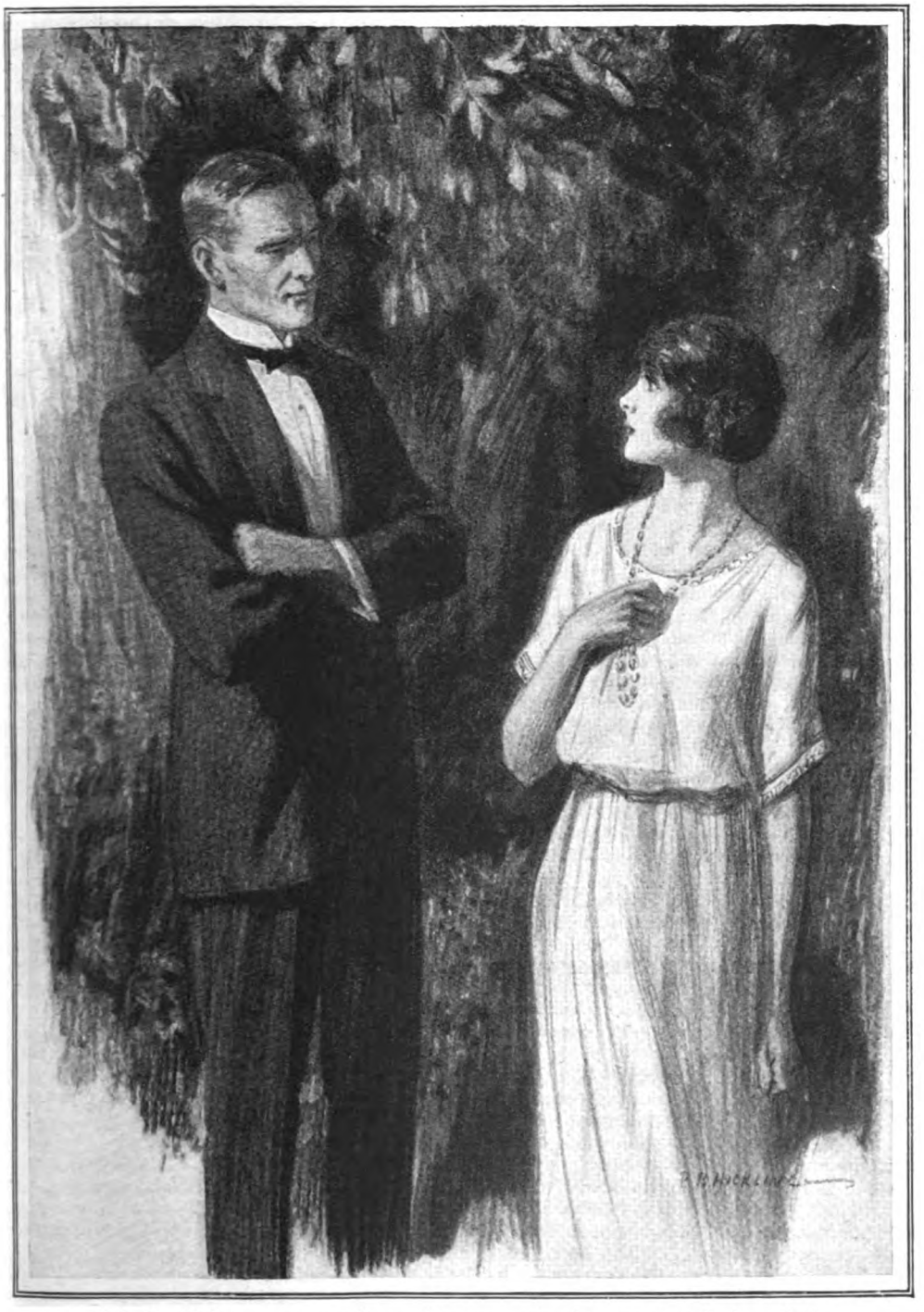
"I really haven't an idea what I shall do—what I can do, in fact, if my health gives way—unless," a piteous quiver of laughter sounded in her voice, "I go into the country and learn to milk cows. There seem to be more cows than anything else in this part of the world."

"But have you no resources at all?" he questioned. "No people?"

"But one doesn't turn to one's people for help," said Frances, in her quiet way. "My parents both died long ago. I was dependent in my girlhood upon a married brother—a business man—with a family. I soon broke away, and there is no going back. It wouldn't be fair to anyone."

"Of course not," said Montague. "But wouldn't he tide you over this crisis?"

"While I learn to milk cows, you mean?"



"Is the Bishop going to do anything to make things easier?" he asked.
"Do you think," she replied, "I would take his charity? I'd rather starve —as I have before!"

The laughter in her voice sounded less precarious now. "I couldn't possibly ask him. He has sons to educate, and a wife whom I can't abide. It wouldn't be fair."

"But must you milk cows?" he questioned. "Is there nothing you can do to fill in time—till you get another secretary's job?"

"Ah! And when will that be? Secretaries' jobs are not easily come by. I have only had one other, and then my employer died and I was out of work for months. That is why I can't afford to be out of work now. I've had no time to save."

She spoke without pathos, a mere statement of fact. He liked her for it. Her simple courage combined with her business-like expression thereof attracted him more and more. Whatever hard blows Fate might have in store for her, he was convinced that she would endure them unflinching, would stand on her feet to the very end. It was refreshing to meet this sort of woman. With all the present-day talk of woman's independence he had seldom found her independent when hurt. He was beginning to realize wherein this woman's fascination lay. It was in the fact that whatever happened to herself she would accept responsibility. Whatever her losses might be, she would borrow no man's counters. She was answerable to none, and she held herself strong enough to hold her own.

THAT impression came upon him very forcibly as he talked with her, and it was to remain with him for all time. Here was a woman who made no claim of equality or independence, but—she stood alone.

"You are marvellously brave," he said, and he uttered the words almost involuntarily. "It makes me all the keener to be of use." He paused. "You know, I could be of use if you would allow me."

"In what way?" she said.

He hesitated. "You won't be angry—turn me down unheard?"

"You don't realize that I have great reason to be grateful to you," she said.

"You haven't," he returned, quickly. "I am not much of a philanthropist. I don't pretend to take an interest in people who fail to interest me. I am no better than the majority, Miss Thorold, worse than a good many."

He saw her faint smile. "But better than some," she suggested.

He smiled in answer. "Well, perhaps—better than some. Is there really nothing you can do to fill in time for the present? Because—I can find you another secretary's job later on, if that is what you really want."

"Can you?" she said. "But how?"

He was aware of a momentary embarrassment, and showed it. "It's entirely a business proposition. I am just home from Africa. I am going to write a book on travel and sport. I've got my notes, heaps of 'em. It's just a matter of sorting and arranging in a fairly digestible form. I shall want a secretary, and I have an idea we could arrive at an arrangement not injurious to either of us. You can help me if you will—if you care to—and I should think myself lucky to get anyone so efficient."

"How do you know I am efficient?" she asked, in her straight, direct way.

He laughed a little. "Oh, that! Well, mainly by the way you headed me off this morning when I showed a disposition to interrupt the progress of your work."

"I see." She spoke quietly, without elation. His suggestion seemed to excite no surprise in her, and he wondered a little while he waited for more. "Do you want me to decide at once?" she asked.

"Don't you want to?" he countered. "You have no one—apparently—to consult but yourself."

"That is true. But"—she spoke gravely—"it takes a little while to consult even oneself sometimes. What if I took up work with you and found I did not like it?"

"You would be under no obligation to stop," he said, aware of a sudden, inexplicable desire to overcome her objections. "And you would be no worse off than you are at present. But—I flatter myself you would like it. I think the work would interest you. I am convinced at least that it would not bore you."

"That consideration would not influence me one way or the other," she said. "There are always drawbacks of some description to every walk of life, and boredom—well, boredom is by no means the worst of them."

"There I disagree with you," said Rotherby, boldly. "If you can honestly say that, then you have never really lived."

"That is quite true," said Frances. "I never have."

He gave her a sudden hard look. "Don't you want to?" he said.

She uttered her faint laugh, avoiding his eyes. "I don't—specially—want to starve," she said. "But—I assure you I would rather do that than fail to earn my keep."

"I fully realize that," he said. "Will you give me a trial, then, or let me give you one? I don't know how you put these things, but it means the same thing, I believe."

"Oh, no!" said Frances. "It means something very different. And neither you

nor I had better make up our minds to-night. You are very kind, but very rash; and I think by to-morrow morning you may regret this. In any case, let us wait till then!"

"For your satisfaction or mine?" he said.

"For both." Prompt and steady came her reply, but he was disconcerted no longer.

"Will you tell me one thing?" he said.

Her eyes came to his. "Certainly, if I can."

"Only this." He spoke quickly, with a certain mastery. "If by to-morrow I have not changed my mind, shall you accept my offer?"

She raised her brows slightly. "Why do you ask me that?"

"Because I want to know what to expect. I want to know if you make that condition for your sake or mine." Unhesitatingly he went to the point. He was very nearly sure of her, but still not quite.

She paused for some seconds before she answered him. He wondered if she were seeking a means of escape. Then very calmly she gave him her reply, and he knew that the game was his.

"I have said it was for both, because if you repent of the bargain, so shall I. But—if you do not repent, then I shall accept your offer with gratitude. But you have acted upon impulse, and I think you ought to take time to consider."

"It rests with me, then?" said Rotherby.

"Yes, it rests with you." Quietly, even coldly, she yielded the point. "Of course, as you say, if you decide to take me, it will only be on trial. And if I fail to satisfy you, we are not worse off than we are at present. But please do not decide before to-morrow!"

The words were a request. The tone was almost a command. He could ignore neither, and he swept her a deep bow.

"Madam, your wishes in this matter shall be respected. To-morrow, then—we decide!"

"Thank you," said Frances, quietly.

She turned to go, but suddenly stopped short. He was aware of a change in her—a tremor of agitation.

"Ah!" she said, under her breath.

She was looking out of the shadow into the moonlight, and swiftly his eyes followed hers.

A figure in black was walking slowly and quite noiselessly over the grass by the side of the path.

"Who on earth——" began Montague.

She silenced him with a rapid gesture. "Hush! It is the Bishop!"

He reflected later that from her point of view it might have been wiser to have ignored the warning, and have gone forth openly to meet the advancing intruder. But—perhaps it was the romance of the hour, perhaps merely her impulse communicating itself to him—or even, it might have been, some deeper motive, barely acknowledged as yet, that actuated him—whatever the influence at work, he obeyed her, drawing her back in silence against the trunk of the yew tree.

And so, like two conspirators trapped in that haunted garden, they drew close together in the depth of the shadow and dumbly watched the black-gowned figure advance over the moonlit grass.

CHAPTER IV.

THE ACCUSER.

HE came very slowly, with priest-like dignity, yet in his deliberation of movement there was purpose. It was seldom that the Bishop of Burminster performed any action without a definite end in view. There was indeed something almost fatalistic in all that he did. The wandering friar himself who was said to haunt that sleeping garden could not have moved with greater assurance or more studied detachment of pose.

The man and the woman watching him from their hiding-place drew closer together, as if in some fashion his coming inspired them with awe. It was true that Montague Rotherby's lips bore a smile of cynical amusement, as though the situation appealed more to his sense of humour than to any other emotion. But it was not any humorous impulse that moved him to put his hand suddenly and reassuringly through the tense thin arm of the secretary and closely grip it.

She started sharply at his touch, made for a moment as if she would free herself, then stiffened and stood in rigid immobility.

For the Bishop was drawing nearer, and there was resolution as well as protection in Montague's hold.

Slowly came the advancing figure, and the tension of the two who waited grew acute. Though he smiled, Montague's teeth were clenched, and there was a glitter of ferocity in his eyes. He formed his plan of action while he waited. If the Bishop passed them by, he would release his companion instantly, bid her begone, and himself cover her retreat.

It was the only feasible plan, and in the morning she would thank him. In the morning she would realize that circumstances had placed her in his debt, and she would be ready to meet the obligation in accordance with his views. She certainly could not flout him or even keep him at

a distance after this. Without forcing himself upon her, he had become her intimate friend, and she was not a woman to repudiate an obligation. She would acknowledge with gratitude all that he had done for her.

He no longer questioned with himself as to wherein lay the attraction that drew him. The attraction was there, and he responded to it without scruple, as he had responded to such all his life. After all, it was no responsibility of his what she chose to do with her life. It was not likely that he was the first man to come into her existence. She knew very well what she was doing, and if she relaxed her guard he had no hesitation in storming her defence. After all, it was but a game, and women were quite as adroit in their moves as men, even more so in some cases, he reflected, though in this one it had certainly so far not been a difficult contest.

Swiftly the thoughts succeeded each other as he watched with a grim vigilance the advancing figure.

The Bishop was close to them now, almost abreast of them. He could see the harsh lines on the thin, ascetic countenance. There was something mediæval about that iron visage, something that was reminiscent of the Inquisition. This was the type of man who would torture and slay for the fulfilment of an ideal—a man of stern fanaticism, capable of the highest sacrifice, but incapable of that which even a dog may show to his master—the Divine offering of love.

Now he had reached the old yew in the shadow of which they stood, and, as if he had attained his destination, he stood still.

MONTAGUE felt a sharp shiver run through his companion's arm, and he gripped it more closely, with a steady, warning pressure. The Bishop was not looking in their direction. There was yet a chance that he might pass on and leave them unobserved. The situation was ridiculous. They had no reason for concealing themselves. But the instinct, old as mankind, that prompts the two whom Fate has thrown together to avoid the intrusion of a third, the unacknowledged dread of being caught in an equivocal position, the half-formed wish to protect that gleaming, iridescent wonder that is called Romance from the sacrilegious touch of the outside world—all of these impulses had conspired to bring about this absurd concealment, which the man found both gratifying and exasperating. To be discovered now would be humiliating, but if the critical moment passed and they were left in peace he recognized that another powerful link would be added to the chain that some caprice had induced him to forge.

As for the woman, he had no clue to her thoughts. He only knew that with her whole soul she hoped to escape undetected.

The Bishop had turned towards the edge of the lake, and was standing there in sombre reflection.

"What on earth is he thinking about?" questioned Montague with himself. "He can't know we are here! He wouldn't play such a cad's game as that."

Nevertheless his heart misgave him. He had no faith in the Bishop's sense of fair play. In his own weird fashion he believed him to be even more unscrupulous than he was himself. That any beauty of scene held him in that trance-like stillness he did not believe. He was merely thinking out some fell design for the glory of the fetish he worshipped.

Montague began to grow impatient. Were they to be kept there in suspense all night while he worked out his fantastic problems? He began to consider the possibility of making a move unheard and unseen while the Bishop remained wrapt in meditation. He had passed so close to them without seeing them that it seemed more than possible that an escape could be accomplished without any very serious risk.

He pressed his companion's arm, and was aware of her eyes, strangely luminous in the shadow, turned towards him in inquiry. By some trick of the moonlight, the pale features took on a sudden unexpected beauty. He saw her in that moment not as the woman she was, faded and weary with the long harassment of overwork and anxiety, but as the woman she might have been—vivid, enchanting, young. The illusion was so arresting that he forgot his purpose and stood gazing upon her, bound by a spell that he had not known for years.

There came a sound through the magic stillness—the soft chiming of the quarter from the cathedral tower. The Bishop stirred as if a hand had been laid upon him, stirred and turned.

His face was in the full moonlight, and it was the face of a denunciatory prophet. He spoke in hollow tones that reached them like a voice of doom.

"As I thought!" he said. "As I might have known! You may come out of your hiding-place. No subterfuge will serve either of you. Go—both of you! Let me never see you again!"

"Damnation!" said Montague.

The vision flashed away from him. He saw only the red fire of his wrath. Then,

strangely, the vision returned. He saw her again—a woman of amazing possibilities, a woman to dream about, a woman to love.

He took her cold hand very firmly into his own and led her forth.

She tried to resist him, to free herself. He knew that later. At the time he realized but the one overmastering determination to vindicate himself and her in the eyes of the denunciatory prophet. He strode forward and confronted him.

"Damnation!" he said again, and he flung the word with all the force of his fury. "Who are you to dare to speak to either of us in this strain? What the devil do you mean by it?"

He spoke as one man speaking to another, but the calm gesture of the Bishop's uplifted hand dispelled the situation before it could be established.

"Who am I?" he said. "I am a priest of the Lord, to whom profanity is no more than the vapouring of fools. How do I dare to speak to you thus? I have never flinched from my duty in the bold rebuke of vice. What do I mean? I mean that you and this woman have been detected by me on the very verge of sin. And I tell you to go because I cannot stop your sinning until you have endured your hell and—if God is merciful—begun to work out your own salvation."

"The man is mad!" said Montague.

A moment before he had been in a mood to take him by the throat, but now he paused, arrested by the fanatical fervour of the Bishop's speech. Quite suddenly he realized that neither argument nor indignation would have the smallest effect. And, curiously, his anger cooled. Any other man he would have hurled into the placid waters of the lake without an instant's hesitation. But this man was different. Almost involuntarily he accorded him the indulgence which the abnormal can practically always command.

He turned very quietly to the woman, whose hand had closed convulsively in his own, but who stood beside him, immobile and emotionless as a statue.

"Miss Thorold," he said, "I must apologize to you for—quite inadvertently—placing you in this extraordinary situation. The whole thing is too monstrous for discussion. I only ask you to believe that I regret it from the bottom of my heart, and I beg that you will not allow anything so outrageous to prejudice you with regard to the future."

Her eyes were downcast. She heard him without raising them. And still no shade of feeling crossed her death-white face as she made reply.

"I am not likely to do that," she said, coldly and proudly. "I am not likely to blame you for showing kindness to me in the house of one to whom mercy and humanity are unknown. I do not hold you responsible for another man's wickedness."

It was a challenge, clearly and unhesitatingly spoken, and Montague marvelled at the icy courage of her, the biting disdain. As she spoke she drew her hand from his, and paused, facing him, not deigning to look upon her accuser; then, as he spoke no word, calmly, regally, with head erect but eyes cast down, she walked away over the moonlit grass, and so passed out of their sight.

CHAPTER V.

THE HOLIDAY.

THE soft thudding of cows' feet through the red mud of a Devon lane—the chirruping call of a girl's voice in their rear—the warning note of a blackbird in the hedge—and the magic fragrance of honeysuckle everywhere! Was ever summer day so fair? Was ever world so green?

"Drat that young Minnie! If she hasn't taken the wrong turning again!" cried the voice that had chirruped to the herd, and there followed a chuckling laugh that had in it that indescribable sweetness of tone which is peculiar only to those of a contented mind.

It took Frances Thorold by storm—that laugh. She got up swiftly from her knoll, sketching-block in hand, to peer over the hedge.

The hedge was ragged and the lane was deep, but she caught a glimpse of the red cows trooping by, and of the pink dress and wildly untidy hair of their attendant. Then there came a sharp whistle, and a dog went scampering by, audible but unseen in the leafy depth of the lane. There followed a blundering check among the animals, and then again the clear, happy voice calling to order and the equally cheery bark of the dog.

"That'll do, Roger! Come back!" cried the bright voice. "Minnie won't do it again till next time, so you needn't scold. Now, Penelope, what are you stopping for? Get on, old girl! Don't hold up the traffic! Ah, here's a motor-car!"

It was not annoyance so much as a certain comic resignation that characterized the last sentence. The buzz of an engine and the sharp grinding of brakes upon skidding wheels succeeded it, and Frances, still peering over the ragged hedge, flushed suddenly and deeply, almost to the colour of the sorrel that grew about her feet.

She made a small movement as though she would withdraw herself, but some stronger motive kept her where she was. The car came grinding to a standstill almost abreast of her, and she heard the animals go blundering past.

"Thank you, sir," called the fresh voice, with its irresistible trill of gaiety. "Sorry we take up so much room."

"Don't mention it! You've as much right as I—if not more," called back the driver of the car.

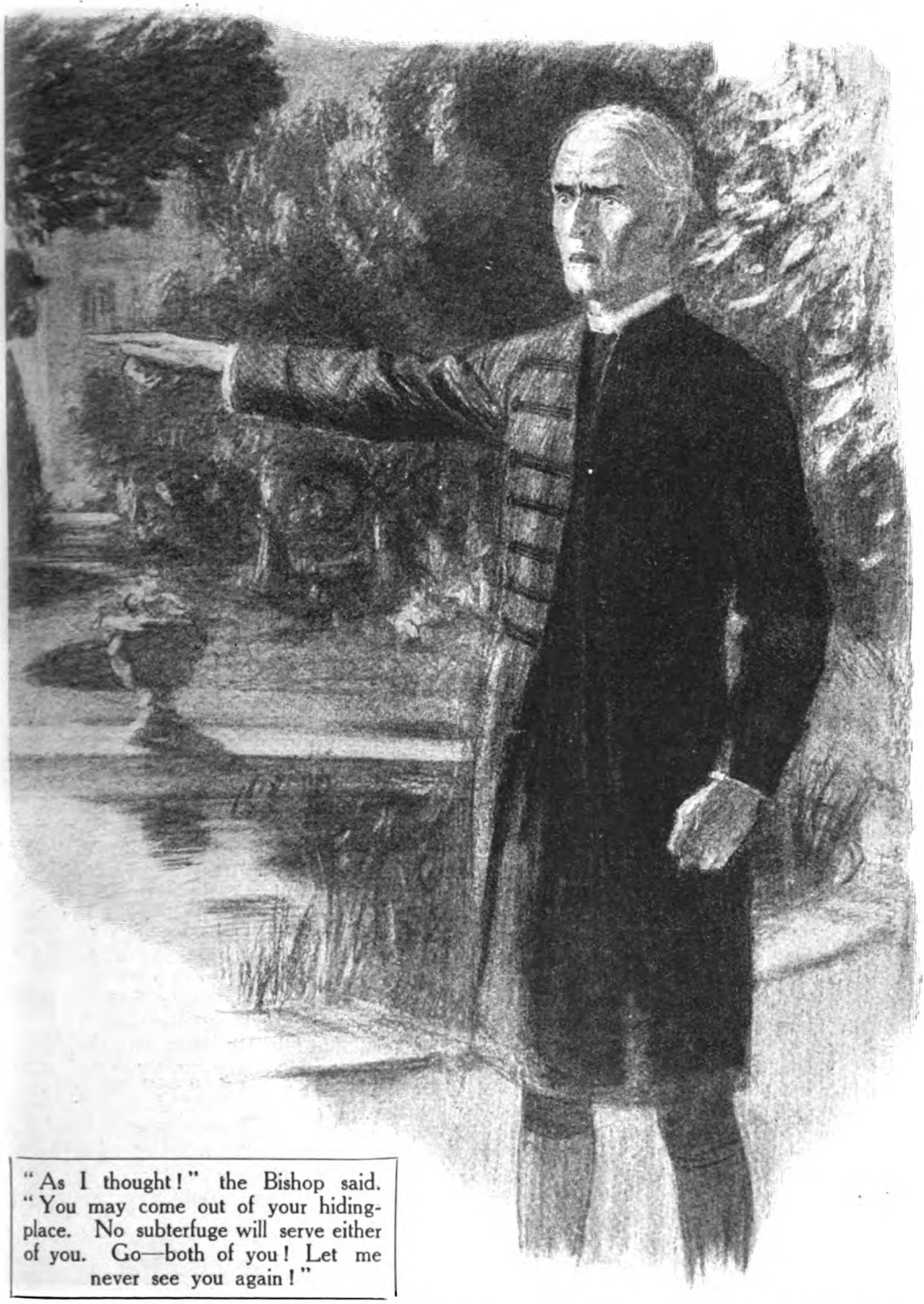
Frances stirred then, stirred and drew back. She left her green vantage-ground and sat down again on the bank. Her eyes returned to her sketching-block, and she began to work industriously. The hot colour receded slowly from her face. It took on a still, mask-like expression as though carved in marble. But the tired look had wholly left it, and the drawn lines about the mouth were barely perceptible. They looked now as if they sought to repress a smile.

She chose a tiny paint-brush from her box, and began to work with minute care. The sketch under her hand was an exquisite thing, delicate as a miniature—just a brown stream with stepping-stones and beyond them the corner of an old thatched barn—Devon in summer-time. The babble of the stream and the buzz of a million insects were in that tender little sketch with its starry meadow flowers and soft grey shadows. She had revelled in the making of it, and now it was nearly finished.

She had counted upon finishing it that afternoon, but for some reason, after that episode in the lane, her hand seemed to have lost its cunning. With the fine brush between her fingers she stopped, for her hand was shaking. A faint frown, swiftly banished, drew her brows, and then one of them went up at a humorous angle and she began to smile.

The next moment very quietly she returned the brush unused to its box, laid both sketching-block and paints aside, and clasped her hands about her knees, waiting.

The commotion in the lane had wholly



"As I thought!" the Bishop said. "You may come out of your hiding-place. No subterfuge will serve either of you. Go—both of you! Let me never see you again!"

ceased, but there was a sound of feet squelching in the mud on the other side of the hedge. Frances turned her head to listen. Finally, the smile still about her lips, she spoke :—

"Are you looking for someone?"

"By Jove!" cried back a voice in swift and hearty response. "So you're there, are you? I thought I couldn't be wrong—through a stream and past a barn and down a hill. What damnable hills they are, too, in this part of the world! How on earth does one get up there?"

Quite concisely and without agitation she made reply. "One usually goes to the bottom of the hill, opens a gate, and walks up on the other side."

"Oh, that's too much to ask!" protested the voice below her. "Isn't there some hole where one can get through?"

"If one doesn't mind spoiling one's clothes," said Frances.

"Oh, damn the clothes! This infernal mud, too, for that matter! Here goes!"

There followed sounds of a leap and a scramble, a violent shaking of the nut-trees and brambles that composed the hedge, and finally a man's face, laughing and triumphant, appeared above the confusion.

"By gad!" he said, "you look as if you were on a throne!"

She smiled at him, without rising. "It is quite a comfortable perch. I come here every day. In fact"—she indicated the sketching-block by her side—"this is how I amuse myself."

He came to her, carrying a trail of honeysuckle, which he laid at her feet. "May I share the throne?" he said.

She looked at him, not touching the flowers, her smile faintly quizzical. "You can sit on a corner of this rug if you like. It is rather a ragged affair, but it serves its purpose."

She indicated the corner farthest from her, and Rotherby dropped down upon it with a satisfied air. "Oh, this is a loafer's paradise! How are you getting on, Miss Thorold? You look"—he regarded her critically—"you look like one who has bathed in magic dew."

She met his look, her own wholly impersonal. "I feel rather like that," she said. "It has been a wonderful fortnight. I am quite ready for work."

He leaned upon his elbow, still carelessly watching her. "Have you learnt to milk cows yet?" he asked.

"Well, no." She laughed a little. "But I have several times watched the operation. You saw that girl just now driving the cows back to pasture for the night? She comes from such a dear old farm on the moor, called Tetherstones. I have stood at the door of the cowshed and watched her. She is wonderfully quick at it."

"Is she going to give you lessons?" he asked idly.

"I haven't got to the point of asking her yet. We only pass the time of day when we meet."

FRANCES picked up her sketching-block again. Her hand was quite steady now.

"May I see?" said Rotherby.

"When it is finished," she said.

"No, now, please!" His tone had a hint of imperiousness.

She leaned forward with the faintest possible suggestion of indulgence, such as one might show to a child, and gave it to him.

He took it in silence, studied it at first casually, then more closely, with growing interest; finally, looked up at her.

"You ought to find a ready market for this sort of thing. It's exquisite."

She coloured then vividly, almost painfully, and the man's eyes kindled, watching her.

"Do you really think that?" she asked, in a low voice.

"Of course I do. It isn't to my interest to say it, is it? You've mistaken your vocation."

He smiled with the words and gave her back the sketch.

"It isn't a paying game—except for the chosen few. But I believe I could find you a market for this sort of thing. I had no idea you were so talented."

"It has always been my pastime," said Frances, rather wistfully. "But I couldn't make a living at it."

"You could augment a living," he said.

"Ah! But one needs interest for that. And I"—she hesitated—"I don't think I am very good at pushing my wares."

He laughed. "Well, I'll supply the interest—such as it is. I'll do my best, anyway. You go on sketching for a bit, and I'll come and look on and admire. Shall I?"

She gave him a steady look. "When are you going to begin your book?"

"Oh, that!" He spoke with easy assurance. "That'll have to keep for a bit. I'm not in the mood for it yet. By and by—in the winter."

Her face changed a little. "In that case," she said, slowly, "I ought to set about finding another post."

"Oh, rot!" said Montague, with lightness. "Why?"

She turned from her steady regard of him and looked down at the sketch in her hand. "Because," she said, her voice chill and constrained, as was its habit in moments of emotion, "I haven't money to carry me on till then. I shouldn't have wasted this fortnight if I had known."

"It hasn't been wasted," argued Montague, still careless and unimpressed. "You couldn't have done without it."

She did not lift her eyes. "It is quite true I needed a rest," she said, "but I could have employed the time in trying to find another post. I could have advertised. I could have answered advertisements."

"And ended up as you are now, minus the cost of the postage," said Montague.

She took up her brush again. "Yes, that is quite possible; but I should have had the satisfaction of knowing that I had done my best."

"You've done much more for yourself by just taking a rest and sketching," said Montague. "Have you done any besides this?"

She answered him with her eyes upon her work. "Three."

"Will you let me see them?"

"If you wish"

"When?"

"Whenever you like."

"May I come round to-night, then—some time after dinner? I went round to your diggings just now. It was the old woman who sent me on here. Extraordinary old witch! Does she make you comfortable?"

"The place is quite clean," said Frances.

"That's non-commi tal. What's the food like?"

"I don't suppose you would care for it. It is quite plain, but it is good. It suits me all right, and it suits my purse."

He pounced upon the words. "Then why in Heaven's name worry? A little extra holiday never hurt anyone, and you have got your sketching."

"I can't afford it," said Frances.

"But if you can sell some of your work?"

"I can't," she said.

"Well, I can for you. It's the same thing. Look here, Miss Thorold! You're not being reasonable."

She turned again and faced him. Her eyes were very quiet, quite inscrutable.

"It is not I that am unreasonable, Mr. Rotherby," she said. "It is simply you—who do not understand."

There was stubbornness in his answering look. "I understand perfectly," he said. "I know what you are afraid of. But if you will only leave things to me, it won't happen. After all, you promised to be my secretary, didn't you? You can't seriously mean to let me down?"

"I!" Her eyes widened and darkened in genuine surprise. "I don't think you can very well accuse me of that," she said.

"Can't I? In spite of the fact that you are threatening to throw me over?" There was a bantering note in his voice, but his look was wary.

"I must think of myself," she said. "You forget I have got to make my living."

"No; I haven't forgotten. But there are more ways than one of doing that." His look fell suddenly to the trailing honeysuckle at her feet, and dwelt there with an odd abstraction. "Surely you can fill in time as I have suggested," he said. "You won't be a loser in the end."

"I like to feel I am standing on firm ground," said Frances Thorold, and returned to her sketch with an air of finality, as though thereby the subject were closed.

Montague took out a cigarette-case and opened it, offering it to her with the same abstracted air.

She shook her head without looking at him. "No, thank you. I've never taken to it. I've never had time."

"It seems to me that you have never had time for anything that's worth doing," he said, as he took one himself.

"That is true," she said, in her brief way.

THERE fell a silence between them. Montague leaned upon his elbow smoking, his eyes half-closed, but still curiously fixed upon the long spray of honeysuckle, as though the flowers presented to him some problem.

Frances worked gravely at her sketch, just as she had worked in the Bishop's room at Burminster a fortnight before, too deeply absorbed to spare any attention for any interest outside that upon which she was engaged. It was her way to concentrate thus.

Suddenly through the summer silence there came a sound—the voice of a little child singing in the lane below—an unintelligible song, without tune, but strangely sweet, as the first soft song of a twittering bird in the dawning.

Frances lifted her head. She looked at Montague. "Did you leave your car in the lane?"

"I did," he said, wondering a little at the sudden anxiety in her eyes.

"Ah!" She was on her feet with the word, her sketching almost flung aside. "She'll run into it."

"Absurd!" he protested. "Not if she has eyes to see!"

"Ah!" Frances said again. "She hasn't!"

She was gone even while she spoke, springing for the gap through which he had forced his way a few minutes earlier, calling as she went in tones tender, musical, such as he had never believed her capable of uttering, "Mind, little darling! Mind! Wait till I come to you!"

She was gone from his sight. He heard her

slipping down the bank into the mud of the lane. He heard the child's voice lifted in wonder, but not in fear.

"You are the pretty lady who came to see the cows. May I hold your hand?"

And Frances' answering voice, with a deep throb in it that oddly made the listening man stiffen as one who listens to undreamt-of music: "Of course you shall, sweetheart. We will walk up the road together, and find some honeysuckle!"

The man's eyes came swiftly downwards to the flowers that trailed neglected where her feet had been. So she did love honeysuckle after all! With a movement of violence half suppressed he snatched up the pink and white blossoms and threw them away.

CHAPTER VI.

THE CAPTURE.

THE description that Frances had given of the lodging she had found for herself in that little Devon village on the edge of the moors gave a very fair impression of the hospitality she enjoyed. The place was scrupulously clean, and, beyond this, quite comfortless. The fare was cottage fare of the very plainest. Her hostess—a stiff-limbed old creature, toothless, ungracious—was content to bestow upon her lodger the bare necessaries of life and no more.

"I can boil you up some hot water to wash in, but it'll be an extra," expressed her general attitude towards all things. And Frances, being unable to afford the luxury here implied, contented herself with the sweet, soft moorland water as it came from the pump at the cottage-door. In fact, she very often pumped her own in preference to accepting the grumbling ministrations of the old woman.

But she had been happy during that fortnight of enforced rest after leaving the Palace. The solitude and the boundless leisure of her days had brought healing to her tired soul. She was beginning to feel equipped to face the world afresh. She was looking forward to taking up secretarial work again of an infinitely more congenial character. Her first instinctive hesitation was past. She was prepared to take refuge once more in professional absorption, resolutely banishing all misgivings regarding the man who had hidden with her in the Bishop's garden and had taken his stand beside her in the Bishop's presence.

They had been cast forth—she thought of it sometimes still with the tremor of a smile—they had been driven out as Adam and Eve, and neither of them would ever enter that garden again. Their intercourse since that night had been of the very briefest. Rotherby had obtained from her an address by which he could find her at any time. His attitude had been as business-like as her own, and she had been reassured. She had agreed to take a three weeks' holiday before entering upon her new duties, and now had come this. He had followed her to tell her that he would not now need her until the winter.

"By gad!" he said,

It had been a blow. She could not deny it. But already busily she was making her plans. He would have to understand clearly that she could not wait; but he had shown her great kindness, and if he really desired

her services she would try to find some temporary work till he should be ready. She wondered, as she sorted out her sketches in the little bare sitting-room in preparation for his coming that evening, if he really did need her, or if he had merely obeyed the impulse of the moment and had now repented. She recalled his careless gallantry, which might well cover a certain discomfiture at having placed himself in a difficult position, his obvious desire to help her still by whatever means that might come to hand. Yes, it was impossible to formulate any complaint against him. He had been kind—too kind. He had allowed his sympathies to carry him away. But they should not carry him any farther. On that point she was determined. He should see her sketches—since he wished to see them—but no persuasion on his part should induce her to look upon them as a means of livelihood. She would make him understand very clearly that she could accept no benefits from him in this direction. As she had said, she must feel firm ground under her feet, and only by a fixed employment could she obtain this.

So ran her thoughts on that summer evening as she waited for his coming with a curious mixture of eagerness and reluctance. She marvelled at the kindness of heart that had prompted his interest in her. If she had been—as she once had been—an ardent, animated girl, it would have been a different matter. But she had no illusions concerning herself. Her youth was gone, had fled by like a streak of sunshine on a grey hillside, and only the greyness remained. It was thus that she viewed herself, and that any charm could possibly have outlived those years of drudgery she did not for a moment suspect. That any part of her character could in any fashion hold an appeal for such a man as Montague Rotherby she could not, and did not, believe. Pity—

"you look as if you were on a throne!"

pity alone—had actuated him, and he chose to veil his pity—for her sake—in the light homage which he would have paid to any woman whom he found attractive. Something in the situation, as she thus viewed it, struck a humorous note within her. How odd of him to imagine that a woman of her shrewdness could fail to understand! Ah, well, the least she could do was to let him continue his cheery course without betraying her knowledge of the motive that drove him. She would not be so ungrateful as to let him imagine that she saw through his kindly device. Only she must be firm, she must stand upon solid ground, she must—whatever the issue—assert the independence that she held as her most precious possession. Whatever he thought of her, he should never deem her helpless.

There came the click of the garden-gate, and she started with a sharp jerk of every pulse. Again, before she could check it, the hot colour rushed upwards to her face and temples. She stood, strangely tense, listening.

HE came up the path with his easy saunter. She knew it for the step of a man of the world. None of the village men walked thus—with this particular species of leisurely decision, unhurried assurance. He strolled between the line of hollyhocks and sunflowers and spied her by the window.

"Ah! Hallo! May I come in this way?"

He stepped over the low sill into the room. It was growing dusk. The air was extraordinarily sweet.

"There's a mist on the moors to-night," he said. "Can you smell it?"

"Yes," said Frances.

She gave him no word of greeting. Somehow the occasion was too unconventional for that. Or was it merely the manner of his entrance—the supreme confidence of his intimacy with her—that made conventional things impossible? He entered her presence without parley, because—obviously—he knew she would be glad to see him. The breath caught oddly in her throat. Was she glad?

The tension of her limbs passed, but she was aware of it still mentally—a curious constraint from which she could not break free. She laid her sketches before him almost without words.

He took them and looked at them one after another with obvious interest. "You've got the atmosphere!" he said. "And the charm! They're like yourself, Miss Thorold. No, it isn't idle flattery. It's there, but one can't tell where it lies. Ah, what's this?"

He was looking at the last of the pictures with an even closer interest.

"That is the little blind child at Tetherstones," she said. "It is only an impression—not good at all. I couldn't get the appeal of her—only the prettiness. It isn't even finished."

"What, the child you went to in the lane this morning? But this is clever. You must finish this. You've got her on the stepping-stones, too. She doesn't cross those alone, surely?"

"Oh, yes, she goes everywhere, poor mite. She is just seven and wonderfully brave. Sure-footed too! She wanders about quite alone."

"Poor kid!" Rotherby laid the sketch aside and turned to her. "Miss Thorold, I've come for a talk—a real talk. Don't freeze me!"

She smiled almost in spite of herself, and the thought came to her that he must have had a very winning personality as a boy. Gleams of the boy still shone out now and again as it were between the joints of his manhood's armour.

"Sit down!" she said. "Sit down and talk!"

But Rotherby would not sit. He began to pace the narrow room restlessly, impatiently.

"You accused me of letting you down this morning," he said. "And I protest against that. It wasn't fair. You've got a wrong impression of me."

"I!" said Frances.

"Yes, you!" He met her surprise with a certain ruthlessness. "I know it sounded like the other way round, but it wasn't actually. In your heart you felt I'd played you a dirty trick—let you down. Own up! Didn't you?"

She replied with that slight humorous lift of the eyebrow that was characteristic of her. "I really didn't put it quite like that—even in my heart, Mr. Rotherby. I owe you too much for that."

He flung round as if at the prick of a goad. "What do you owe me? Nothing whatever! Let's talk sense, Miss Thorold! You don't owe me anything—except perhaps some sort of reparation for the restless nights you have made me go through."

Dead silence followed his words, uttered on the edge of a laugh that somehow had a dangerous note. He had his back to her as he uttered them, but in the silence he turned again and came back, treading lightly, with something of a spring.

Frances stood quite straight and motionless, with that characteristic pose of hers that was in some inexplicable fashion endowed with majesty. She did not attempt to answer or avoid him as he returned. She only faced him very steadily in the failing light.

"Do you know what I mean?" he said, stopping before her.

She made a slight movement of negation, but she did not speak. She stood as one awaiting an explanation.

He bent towards her. "Don't you know what I mean, you wonderful woman? Haven't you known from the very beginning—you Circe—you enchantress?"

His arms came out to her with the words. He caught the slim shoulders, and in a moment he had her against his breast.

"Oh!" gasped Frances, and said no more, for he pressed her so closely to him that no further words could come.

She did not resist him. Burningly, afterwards, she remembered her submission, remembered how, panting, her lips met his, and were held and crushed till blindly she fought for breath but not for freedom. It all came like a fevered dream. One moment she had been a woman of the world—a business woman—cold, collected, calm; the next she was a girl again, living, palpitating, thrilling to the rapture which all her life she had missed, drinking the ecstasy of the moment as only those who have been parched with thirst can drink. She was, as it were, borne on a great wave of amazed exultation. That he should love her—that he should love her! Ah, the marvel of it—and the gladness that was like to pain!

He was speaking now, speaking with lips that yet touched her own. "So now I have caught you—my white flame—my wandering will-o'-the-wisp! How dared you refuse my flowers this morning? How dared you? How dared you?"

He kissed her between each question, hotly, with a passion that would not be denied. And she lay there in his arms, quivering, helpless, wildly rejoicing in the overwhelming mastery of the great flood-tide on which she was borne.

Her life had been so singularly empty—just a fight for bare existence. There had been no time for new friendships—old friendships had waned. And now this! O God, now this!

She did not try to answer him. His kisses stayed all speech. His arms encompassed her—lifted her. He sat down on the little horsehair sofa in the growing darkness, holding her. And she clung to him—clung to him—in the abandonment of love's first surrender.

(Another long instalment will appear next month.)

ACROSTICS.

OUR twenty-third series of acrostics begins with No. 117, printed below, and will run for four months. Prizes to the value of twelve guineas will be awarded to the most successful solvers.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 117.

To find the first, think of ten sixty-six;
With eighteen fifteen on the other fix.

1. The school upon the hill let ploughman seek.
2. First letter of the alphabet, in Greek.
3. Begin; the point a sailor must enclose.
4. Three sides it has, as every schoolboy knows.
5. A flatterer sincere, a copier.
6. Think of your birthday, and South Africa.
7. A cave, providing rhyme for painter's name.
8. One person sings a word that rhymes with game.

PAX.

Answers to Acrostic No. 117 should be addressed to the Acrostic Editor, THE STRAND MAGAZINE, Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C.2, and must arrive not later than by the first post on April 10th. They must be written on half-sheets of notepaper, or on cards; at the foot of the solution must appear the solver's pseudonym, and (except in the case of postcards) nothing else. Flimsy paper should not be used.

One alternative answer may be sent to each light.

ANSWER TO DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 116.

A TALE of wandering by sea and land
Displays the genius of a master-hand.

1. From England certainly they are not far,
   But Egypt shows us clearly where they are.
2. Take cleric, half of whom should not appear,
   Take part of place, and find it present here.
3. Two Roman figures mix with lady fair:
   Nine-lettered word—last five say what and where.
4. First catch the beast, the central third s lect,
   Half of a mount and half a state reject.
5. Teaching in this the nine-year-old should seek,
   But keep her clear of Algebra and Greek.
6. The aim of many, and of some the lot,
   From east, from west, from south it cometh not.
7. With poisoned knife she cut the bird in two,
   The bird supposed to feed on air and dew.
8. One name of her—whose bridegroom, and his wife.
   Welcomed a guest, then robbed him of his life.
9. Choose one of twelve, one word that four will make,
   First and last words refuse, the others take.

PAX.

1.	K	yle	S
2.	I	tgif	T
3.	D	eauvill	E
4.	N	i	V
5.	A	rtific	E
6.	P	romotio	N
7.	P	arysati	S
8.	E	ny	O
9.	D	iga	N

NOTES.—Light 1. The Kyles of Bute. See the first four letters of the second line of the couplet. 2. Whitgift; Archbishop, and Yorkshire village; half of the word "whom" vanishes; gift, present. 3. D and V, Eulalie. A town (ville) in France. 4. Carnivore, Carmel, Oregon. 5. Sheridan, The Rivals, i., 2. Light 6. Psalm 75. Light 7. Plutarch, Life of Artaxerxes: how Parysatis poisoned Statira. 8. Enyo, another name of Bellona. Macbeth is called "Bellona's bridegroom." 9. Cardiganshire, one of the twelve Welsh counties; car, dig, an, shire.

In No. 114, the first light did not prove satisfactory, and all answers have been considered equally correct. For the fourth light of the same acrostic, "Amoroso" is also accepted.

The answer to the extra acrostic, and the winners of the twenty-first series, will be published next month.

Dream Toys

by

MAURICE HEWLETT

ILLUSTRATED BY L. HOCKNELL

IT is a mistake to suppose that toys make children happy. They make them many things, but not that. Happiness is an ecstasy, and can only be self induced. Something must be "going on," as Gray said, who knew only too well what happiness was because he never had it—and with toys nothing goes on, unless you wind them up; and then—why, then you have to wind them up again. Children's happiness, like other people's, consists in becoming rather than being. Hope enters into it, and Faith too. Toys are finite things. Once you know what a toy will do, there's an end of it; no room for Hope that it will do something else; and as for Faith, that is, as the hymn says, melted into sight, and therefore all over. The single chance that a toy has of being any good to a child is to get itself broken. The moment that happens, as if by a miracle, Hope comes in—that it may be mended; or Faith, that it is exactly what it was, only much better. Then there is Loyalty, which is at least half of love. Consider a little girl with a doll. If it is shiny-faced, its nose a mere blur, its cheeks wan-blue, a thread of scarlet for a mouth, between white lips; eyebrows rubbed away, hair in patches, harsh as winter grass, and one eye gone—then it is beloved; it lives on the best. A new one is treated ceremonially, like a Dalai Lama. She and it are barely acquainted. She looks at it, afraid to touch. It doesn't sit up to tea with her, or go into her bed, or abroad to Kensington Gardens. It is like a visitor to the drawing-room, not a thing of her clay. You can dress and undress it, I dare say; it may shut its eyes when it lies down. But—and the objection is provoked by that very accomplishment—it can't open them again unless you set it up. And that, of course, is nonsense.

So I come to my proposition, that realism has been the ruin of toys, as of many other pleasures of this world. I remember very well my first model locomotive. I remember the prickly feeling in the small of the back when it stood before me, shining brass and blue lacquer, complete, as it seemed, in every particular. A label upon its goodly bulk bore the famous name of Stephenson; on the tender were the mystic letters G.W.R. What else could you want? It had a boiler, a piston, a crank. True, there was a spirit-lamp in the place of a furnace; that was my first check. Nevertheless, when it was full of water, and the wicks well alight; when steam issued from the right place, and the whistle uttered a shrill cry; when the piston began to work—I own that my bosom swelled and entirely shut criticism out. Well, then it was induced to move, and actually did—and almost immediately despair settled down upon me like a river-fog. Farewell, Rewards and Fairies! The infernal thing steamed at every pore; it was enveloped in cloud, was no more like an engine than any ordinary cloud. I was chilled to the marrow—and that was a pity, because otherwise I might have observed that there was a safety-cock. Of that I neither knew nor thought; and the consequence was a violent convulsion which lifted the engine on its hind wheels—an engine rampant—and then threw it on to its side. The methylated spirit escaped and lapped it in flames; it split with a loud report, and flooded the carpet with boiling water.

After that, oddly enough, the locomotive, like a wounded soldier, was loved for its honourable scars, and became a cherished possession. It was a point of honour to believe it perfect—and perfect it became.

That broken, ridiculous engine brought upon me my first humiliation—a thing I have never forgotten and cannot forgive. My father had a gigantic friend, a Mr. Wotherspoon. He was a prosperous, handsome, courtly old man, dressy in an antiquated way, which involved him in a long frock-overcoat and a hat with a curly brim. His manners, to his equals, were elaborate, but hearty; to us children, his inferiors, he was a name of fear, because he used to exercise his wit upon us. We knew it, and used to writhe under the lash of his tongue. One afternoon he was at tea with my parents, and I was sent down to see him. He looked at me as you might at an insect, glared and said nothing, probably having nothing on earth to say. I had my rent locomotive in my hands—to me, mind you, a perfect thing. Why not? You could still read its hieratic initials; its wheels still went round and moved, though they could not be moved by the crank. I tell you that, to me, it was an engine in being; and as such I set it on the floor in front of Mr. Wotherspoon, and appealed to him, "Look at my engine!" From his towering height he looked down; I can still shiver at the malice gleaming in his mocking eyes. He kicked it over with his foot. "Off with it to the scrap-heap," he said, and forgot me immediately. If ever I knew hatred hot and insatiable I knew it then. It was a cruel act—I shouldn't like to have such a thing on my conscience—but he was a childless man and knew no better. God forgive him—I never have.

That is not digression, really, but supports me in the proposition I set up, that things are real to a child in proportion as they are unreal to those who don't understand him. My happiest hours of play, in fact, were without toys of any kind that could be seen or handled.

It may be that there are misfits in life, cases where the inner self is not on speaking terms with the outer, the apparent self. Perhaps I was one of them; for it is certainly true that in all my toyless games I was someone else. More than that, I was several persons—in one of my games (if

If a doll has its eyebrows rubbed away and one eye gone—then it is beloved. A new one is treated ceremonially.

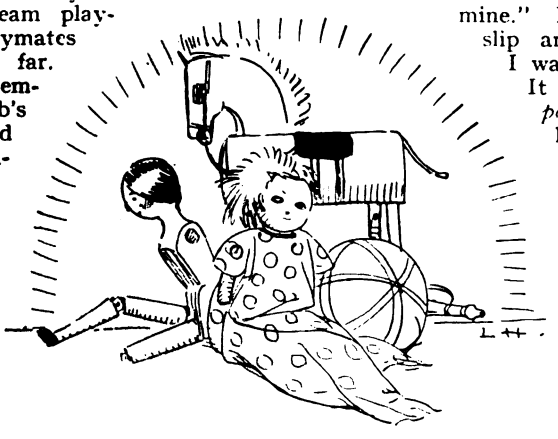
you can call them games) I was a family of three at least. I was, to begin with, a Mr. Severn—he had a Christian name, I suppose, but I don't think that I knew it. He was a dull man, with a shortish black beard, and went to town every morning, like my father, with a black bag. Unlike my father, he became in time Prime Minister of the country which I had imagined—a constitutional monarchy of which my parents were the uncrowned heads. But that was later on; the game lasted for years. Then, also, I was Mrs. Severn, a lady of whom I had become possessed out of a novel of my mother's reading. She was a lovely person, always beautifully dressed; and she was sad, not very happy at home. In the novel she had been so bored with Mr. Severn—who, as I say, was good, but dull—that she had eloped with a large red man who used to beat her; so naturally she thought kindly of Mr. Severn, who had always been kind to her, though dreadfully dull, and at the end of the book she came back and was forgiven. Whether I took up the fortunes of this ill-mated pair before the catastrophe or after, I don't well remember. Anyhow, there was no broad-shouldered tyrant in my experience; the Severns led blameless lives—lives filled with nothing but domestic incident. Meals took place, I remember; Mr. Severn went to town, and came back again. Positively the only exciting thing I can recover was the going to school for the first time of their only child (a boy). Mrs. Severn then leaned her head upon Mr. Severn's shoulder and quietly cried there. He patted her cheek, and said "There, my love, there"; but when he found that he had wetted his fingers, he took his handkerchief out of his coat-tail pocket and wiped them. That offended her. He was that sort of man, unfortunately. But he was as kind as possible, though so dull. There, then, they were for me, as real as this paper and this pen—*she* existing beautifully but unhappily; *he* knowing all about it, but unable to make things any better. Positively nothing happened—yet I played that game by myself for years. There was some kind of luxury in enacting her beauty and weariness, and her husband's love and despair of her. The game to me was like dram-drinking. Whether I was alone or in company I could play it, and nobody suspect it for a moment. It was a thing you could put off and on like a cloak. At will, in an instant, I could be one or both of the unfortunates, and enact their yearning, wing-beating, cage-bird round of days.

A violent convulsion lifted the engine on its hind wheels and then threw it on to its side.

As I remember my childhood—and in speaking of mine I am speaking, I am sure, for children at large—all my really absorbing games were played with dream toys, and spoiled by the invasion of the palpable. There was our railway—and I should like (or, rather, not like) to know the child to whom the railway makes no appeal—

of course we had that; indeed, we had a railway *system* to which the entire garden was subject. The house was one terminus, the stable another—but there were several of them, and often you had to go over two or three railways to reach your desired haven. You did everything yourself; there was nothing to be seen. You were train and guard and porter and passenger and station-master. You screamed in the distance a warning of your approach—as a train. You drew slowly into the station. You stopped; you called out the station's name; you got into yourself; you moved out, picked up speed, went sliding over points, drew up at the junction, changed trains—and so on. Illusion never failed. It was perfect. Space and time were to you as half-crowns to a conjurer: you did what you liked with them. The garden became a county, a province, a continent, as you pleased. You ran through pleasant suburbs, screamed on viaducts over smoky towns, crossed rivers, wound your way along mountain valleys, came out to the open sea. Twenty minutes stretched out into twenty hours; you grew hungry, invaded imaginary refreshment-rooms and bought imaginary Bath buns. That was a game, pursued with zest and entire satisfaction, completely spoiled when indulgent parents or benevolent uncles found it out, and gave us signal-boxes to set up, or wooden trains to pull along the paths. Ridiculous! It ruined everything. How make a garden path look like a railway when a railway train is upon it? How make a trellis-work arbour into a station? The moment you intrude a signal-post upon it, it is more of a trellis-work arbour than ever before. The play became a dreary absurdity and faded out. Dreams have their own logic.

I COULD go on, but will not. The thing is sufficiently stated, I believe. But developments of it may not be amiss. From dream playthings to dream playmates the step is not far. Everybody will remember Charles Lamb's most wistful, and perhaps most beautiful, imagination about them. I knew a boy who for many years was an only child, offspring of preoccupied parents very much interested in their own affairs, and not at all interested, I conceive, in children. The child, then, left very much alone in a large house, provided himself with a companion, who only existed for him. His name was Bardie—he had no other name. He was always at the house, and long conversations could be heard, games of play be witnessed. The two were inseparable, even at meal-times. Bardie had his plate and mug; he shared the bath, shared the bedroom, if not the bed. There was no concealment of him. The parents knew, the servants, the governess; he was spoken of in the drawing-room. I went to call there one day, and passed the lonely child sitting on the stairs. "Hallo!" I said as I passed by him, "aren't you coming in with me?" "I can't," he said; "Bardie is here, not very well." I suppose Bardie died when another child was born to that house. The palpable kills the dream. A signal-box killed my railway, and a baby killed Bardie.



This sort of thing can be pursued; and you will go a long way in the chase, farther indeed than you care to travel. But I must stop with the mention of a man I once knew, a distant connection of mine, who had a dream wife. The merest accident discovered me that; so far as I, or anyone else, knew he was an inveterate bachelor, with such a timidity of women that he was served only by a Chinaman of venerable aspect and extraordinary dexterity. I went to dine with him, at any rate, one summer evening, and a very good dinner his heathen gave us. At about ten o'clock a terrific thunderstorm with a deluge of rain came on; and it was a question of walking a mile and a half to a station. He lived, I think, at Merton, beyond Wimbledon, a very different place in those days from what it probably is now. My host pressed me to stay the night; I thanked him, but feared to put him out. "Not at all, not at all," he said: "you shall have my wife's—you shall have the room next to mine." I did not notice the slip and correction until I was shown the room. It was a lady's room, *point-device*. But I knew — everybody knew—there wasn't a lady in the place. Queer fish we are —all of us, I believe, without exception. But we learn only by such chance peeps into interior process that all the others are as queer as ourselves.

THE DUPLICATE CHEQUE

by HAROLD STEEVENS

ILLUSTRATED BY S.H.VEDDER

ON the stroke of three-thirty, when the bank messenger — punctual as ever at closing time — was already gravitating to the street door, Mr. Wynford Coveney marched into the Broad Street branch. Roland Anketill, the cashier, was hastily entering the last credits of the day in his cash-book. Due on a suburban lawn-tennis court at five o'clock (summer time), he was in no mood to welcome late-comers, but towards a genial and wealthy customer like Coveney asperity was impossible.

"Better late than never," cheerfully remarked that rubicund and sporting gentleman. "I want a new cheque-book."

"Fifty?"

"That'll do."

"'Order' or 'bearer'?"

"'Order,' please. I'm afraid I'm a terrible nuisance."

"Not at all," replied the cashier, marking off the cheque-book in his record and slipping it under the grille.

"You must make allowance for me this time. I'm off to Monte Carlo in the morning and I've cut things rather fine."

"Lucky man!"

"Hope I may be! And now I want two hundred in notes, if you can let me have them."

Coveney opened the new cheque-book and signed the first cheque, running his pen through the word "order," then tore it out and passed it through to the cashier.

"Fill it in for me, Anketill, like a good fellow; then you'll be able to read it. Never write a line if I can help it—you know my motto; anything to get away from pen and ink."

"You'll have to sign that alteration, though"—the cashier pointed to the stroke through the word "order"—"I'm sorry," he added, with a grin.

"Dash—excuse me. What a worry business is! Anyhow, nobody will ever forge my signature, that's very certain!" he chuckled, as he scrawled what purported to be "W. Coveney" against the deletion.

Roland took the cheque in his hand and scrutinized it for an instant.

"I'm not so sure of that," with a quizzical glance at Coveney.

"Give you leave to try!"

"Perhaps I will one of these days." The cashier picked up his pen and stepped behind the little ground-glass screen which enclosed his writing-desk.

"Wish you joy of it!" laughed Coveney, as Roland bent his head to write.

Now in the whole course of his banking career it had never occurred to Roland Anketill to play pranks with his duty, much less to diverge from that rigid standard of integrity which the bank official adopts as naturally as his summer overcoat. Yet on this occasion, for some reason which he was never able to fathom, a sudden freakish desire came over him to take up Coveney's challenge and test his own dexterity. The most likely explanation of his aberration is that a touch of shell-shock from which he once had suffered had impaired the delicate balance of the brain, with the result that in a moment of suppressed irritation it "missed a beat," so to speak, and admitted a suggestion which normally it would have repelled. In other words, one of those deep-seated "inhibitions" which keep most of us on a moderately straight course through life momentarily failed to function.

However that may be, instead of completing the cheque which Coveney had signed, Roland tore another cheque from an odd cheque-book which he kept on his desk for the convenience of customers and proceeded to draw it out for two hundred pounds.

While Roland was writing, under cover of the encircling screen, Coveney lighted a cigar and pushed another under the grille.

"How's the old wound?" he asked.

"Oh, so-so," answered Roland, without looking up. "Head a bit groggy sometimes;

that's why I'm taking my holidays at this God-forsaken time of year."

"Holidays! When do you go?"

"To-morrow night."

"Come to Monte."

"What! On two-fifty a year! Thanks for the helpful suggestion." Roland was carefully copying the hieroglyphic which Coveney called a signature.

"How long do you take?"

"Just as long as they give me—three weeks, or, rather, twenty-one working days, and not a minute less."

"Do it nicely in the time!" chaffed the customer. "Thanks, that's all right," with a glance at the bogus cheque which the cashier laid before him together with the notes. "You'll want the scrap of paper. I'll take these. I won't stay to count them. Never knew you make a mistake yet. Wonderful fellows! Well, good-bye, Anketill, my boy. See you at Monte."

And the genial gentleman walked briskly out, chuckling over his little joke and blissfully unaware that he had accomplished the unusual feat of drawing money from his own account by means of a cheque not signed by himself but forged before his very eyes.

When he perpetrated that stupidity, Roland had not the remotest intention of making an improper use of the genuine cheque which was left on his hands. Nevertheless, the deftness with which he had pulled off the trick rather pleased him, and instead of destroying the perilous document then and there he dropped it into his drawer and hurried off to his tennis.

A couple of brisk sets put everything else out of his head for the time, but in the night, when judgment wanes and fancy waxes, he found himself building castles in the air. Monte Carlo—the very name was glamour! What could he not do if he once got there with money in his pocket!

The more he basked in golden dreams the drabber seemed his humdrum life behind the bank counter. What could it lead to—fortune, adventure, fame, pleasure? Never! He would probably become like so many others that he knew and despised, an automaton without ambition or hope of anything but a pittance and a pension. His spirit revolted at the prospect.

Daylight brought him a little more sense. His work was not so despicable; it was useful and it was responsible, though simple enough for a smart girl to do as well as a man almost. But a fiery maggot was gnawing at his brain, and all through the forenoon, while he manipulated the masses of cheques and notes and coin, a vision floated enticingly before him of green cloth tables where money is tossed about like pebbles and no accounts are kept.

He laughed that dangerous vision to scorn, quenched it with fierce bouts of work again and again until his brain grew hazy with the struggle—failed in riposte—could fight no more.

Money! Money not in sippets as the scant reward of toil and tedium, but in quantity swiftly, without effort, without reckoning! He was half in trance when he took out Coveney's genuine cheque, filled it in precisely as he had filled in the other, entered it in his cash-book, took notes from the till, put them in his pocket.

Later on in the afternoon he balanced his cash and handed in his keys, said good-bye to his colleagues, and walked out of the branch with a feeling of immense relief. The die was cast.

Apprehension he had none. There was enough of his own money to take him out and home again and leave a small margin for play. He would win—he felt it. Still, it was well to have something behind you, because the more you had the more you made. It would all come back again, of course. Coveney should not suffer—not likely.

ROLAND could hold back no longer. Plunging his hand into his pocket, he pulled out the first bank-note that came, leant over the sitting players, and deposited it in the space marked with a large red diamond.

"*Tout va au billet!*" cried the watchful croupier, tapping the note with the corner of his rake. Then he called, sharply, "*Rien ne va plus—plus rien!*"

The little white ball, losing its momentum, slid down into the wheel, jumped out, rolled in again, wandered aimlessly, and at last came to rest in the niche marked "36."

"*Trente-six—rouge—pair et passe!*" cried the croupier, and immediately he and his colleague set to work with callous energy to rake in all the stakes which the players had lost and the "bank" had won. Only a few lonely counters, and Roland's bank-note, were left lying on various parts of the cloth. The croupier tossed counters to the others and pushed a note to Roland, and then for the first time he noticed that he had staked a thousand francs, and he had won an equal sum. The ease of it—twenty pounds in about as many seconds! He hugged himself for joy.

As the evening advanced the crowd of players thickened and the game grew more exciting. After a time Roland secured a seat. Quick at figures as he was, and used to dealing with money, he soon got the hang of it and, encouraged by a run of good fortune, began to play with confidence. The heap of notes and counters in front of him reached comfortable dimensions.

Then came a set-back. He was betting on dozens, *transversales*, and the colour, and thrice in succession he had seen the whole of his stakes snatched away by the croupier's ruthless rake. His chagrin was in no wise relieved by the sight of a goodly pile of counters which the selfsame rake now pushed towards his neighbour. She was a woman—of that he was aware—but whether she was young or old, beautiful or the contrary, he had never troubled to investigate.

Her slender hand went out, but before she could touch her winnings another hand—clawlike, prehensile, and scarcely clean—reached quickly under hers, grabbed the pile, and as quickly retreated.

The girl was dumbfounded. She stared at the spot from which the counters had vanished, then twisted sharply round to look behind her; but seeing only impassive masculine faces she made a spasmodic effort to stand up in the hope of detecting the thief. The immobile throng hemmed her in, however, and since everybody's paramount concern was obviously to cede no inch of space to anybody else, movement was practically impossible.

She sank back helplessly into her chair, gasping: "She has taken my counters!" The catch in her voice and the fact that she spoke English made Roland turn and look at her for the first time. Absorbed though he was in his gambling, the charm of her face smote his heart. She was the ineffably alluring one whom he had often imagined but never found till now. He realized it in a flash as he asked, in astonishment: "Was that yours?"

Her face brightened a little at the sound of a friendly voice and she bent eagerly towards him.

"Yes—it was my last louis!" she burst out. "I've had shocking luck all the evening, and I put my last counter on twenty-two and won it all back again. Now she's stolen it. It wasn't hers at all—it was mine, I know it was." She was struggling against her tears.

"Who was it?" demanded Roland, hotly. "Where is she? I'll get it for you," and he forced back his chair, heedless of his neighbours' ribs and toes.

"She's gone by this time. I never even saw her, the thief!" The tears were shining in her eyes: that maddened Roland.

"Are you sure it was a woman?"

"Yes, I could tell by her hand."

"I'll make a row about it. Here, I say!" he called, standing up and leaning over the table towards the nearest

croupier, "somebody's taken this lady's money."

But the Monégasque croupier knew no English, and possibly did not want

Before she could touch her winnings another hand reached quickly under hers, grabbed the pile, and as quickly retreated.

to in the circumstances. Roland had too little French to explain what had happened; nor did he know that in such a case the "bank," if sufficiently pressed, will often accept the loss and pay the stolen money out again to

the rightful owner for the credit of the house. The croupier, however, wise with the experience of long tradition, decided to give the trouble a chance of settling down of its own accord; he therefore fixed his dusky, mournful eyes on the agitated Englishman and said nothing, and did nothing.

"There's a thief somewhere," Roland blurted.

"Please don't make a fuss"—the girl's hand touched his arm—"it's gone now and it's no use. Thank you very much." She was crying and smiling too.

"It's a brutal shame!" said Roland, dropping back into his seat. "I wish I knew their beastly language better. Is that really all you had left?"

The girl nodded.

Roland hesitated for a moment, then said, impulsively: "Here, let me lend you some. I've got plenty—look, I've won all this."

She shook her head. "Thank you most awfully—I couldn't do that."

"Look here," he said, with decision, as he took four one hundred-franc counters and a dozen smaller ones from his stock and put them down in front of her: "Play these for me—oh, please! My luck's just gone wrong—perhaps you'll bring it back. I want you to, really—you'll do me a kindness."

He spoke so eagerly that the girl acquiesced.

"I'm playing it for you, remember!" she said, with an arch little smile, "because you stood up for me."

"That's all right. Play just as if you were playing for yourself. We can compare notes afterwards." And he turned to his game again.

AFTER that his luck came back with a vengeance. He lost something sometimes, of course, but he won much more than he lost. He noticed that she also was not doing badly, but neither spoke to the other; that would have spoilt the luck, as everybody knows.

About eleven o'clock, after a *coup* which had brought heavy winnings to both of them, she broke the silence with, "I am afraid I must go now. There's your money," and with both her hands she pushed a big heap of counters along the cloth. Her face was beaming with pleasure.

"What nonsense!" cried Roland. "Here, that will never do. I shall lose my luck for ever if you do that. Give me back my five hundred if you must, but keep the rest, of course—you won it."

A troubled look came into her clear brown eyes.

"No, no!" She shook her head. "I was playing it for you. I said so. Suppose I had lost it! Of course it's yours. I couldn't keep it—not possibly."

"Couldn't you?"—he would not press her against her better judgment. "Very well, if you can't; but we must go halves—that's the rule always. I'd have no luck with it if I took the lot; you see that, don't you?"

"Wouldn't you?"

"Absolutely not. Here, I'll count it." He totted up the counters and found that the five hundred francs had grown into the better part of five thousand; of this he handed her the half.

"I am being strictly correct," he said, "but I wish you could take the lot. I don't want it, really."

"You must have it," she insisted. "I am not absolutely sure whether I ought to take any of it, even now, but I'd rather chance that than spoil your luck. I should have been in an awful pickle if you hadn't helped me," she added, rather incongruously; "I should really—you don't know! Why, I am better off than I should have been if that wretched woman had not stolen my winnings. Now I must go."

"I am going too," said Roland. "I've had about enough of it. This is my first night—good fun, isn't it, barring that dirty trick they played on you."

"That's all wiped out now. Better things have happened since then."

To win that smile Roland would have run through fire.

With the ready freemasonry of youth they went off together to change their counters into cash, waited one for the other in the atrium, and went out side by side into the cool sweet night.

Roland found that his total winnings amounted to twenty-nine thousand francs odd, or about six hundred pounds as the exchange stood. He was deeply excited. For the first time in his life he felt that he was riding on the wings of Fortune where no trouble could touch him. Bright dreams of the future dazzled his vision. Where would he not go, what could he not do! He felt twice the man he had been before; with wealth at his command he would take his place among the best!

The delicious scent of orange blossom was wafted to them from the Casino gardens as they walked together up the Boulingrin under the arching palm-fronds, gaily chatting about the Rooms and the play, the croupiers, the people, and the incidents of the evening. At the foot of a long, steep flight of steps the girl stopped and put out her hand. "This is my way," she said, glancing upwards; "we are staying up above, and I'm going to walk up to cool my head."

"Won't you let me see you home?" asked Roland, in the bravery of his expanded self-esteem. "It's rather dark up there, isn't it?"

"Oh, no, thank you very much; I know the way and it is not far. I'm not nervous. You've been awfully kind to me, and I'm ever so grateful."

"Not a bit of it," he replied. "Don't forget that you changed my luck. Perhaps I'll see you there again?"

"Perhaps. Good night," and with a smile and a firm handshake she left him.

ROLAND watched her climbing the long stone flight light-footed and erect, her dress swinging and fluttering. He thought of the old picture of Jacob's dream, with the stately angels floating up and down the sunbeam stairs between earth and heaven.

She reached the top and turned the corner without looking back. Then he became aware that he had been standing in a puddle of water; he stepped out of it and stood for a moment stamping his feet to knock the water off his boots. "What a darling!" he said aloud.

As he uttered the words, he thought he heard a scream. Standing perfectly still, he listened anxiously. A woman's scream in the night is a horrifying thing to a man, though Roland's first thought was, "That is too far away—Monégasques at play, perhaps—not my business, I suppose."

But in a moment it came again—a woman's scream without any doubt this time, and much nearer than he thought; he realized with acute alarm that the wind and height together had tricked his ear and that something dreadful was happening at no great distance from the top of the stone flight where the girl of his heart might very well be passing now.

Three at a time Roland bounded up the steep stairs, straining his muscles to the utmost. As he neared the top, heart thumping and lungs heaving with the sudden violent exertion, he swerved towards the corner round which she had vanished, and with a final spring landed just under the parapet lamp which lighted the topmost step.

To his right the road ascended, and a dozen yards up the acclivity, and just within the radius of the lamplight, he descried dark figures scuffling. Precisely at that moment, moreover, one figure detached itself with a jerk from the rest and darted towards the spot where he stood in the patch of shadow just under the lamp.

The fellow wore a dark, ill-fitting suit and a peaked cap pulled well down, which concealed the upper part of his face though not the depraved mouth and paltry chin. But what riveted Roland's attention and made him mad with fury was a lady's handbag of glistening beadwork which the ruffian carried dangling in his hand, and which Roland instantly recognized as the very bag which he had seen beside him at the gaming-table during the greater part of the evening.

He did not think twice. As the thief came level with him Roland stepped forward out of the shadow and shot out his fist with the full heave of his shoulders behind it.

The swinging blow landed full and fair on the fugitive's jawbone, lifted him off his feet, and sent him hurtling down the stairs.

Roland heard him thud and slither on the stone, but a smothered cry from the girl reminded him that it was not the bag but she herself that mattered most. Half-a-dozen strides brought him to her side.

A thick-set brute of a fellow had both her little wrists pinioned in one of his coarse hands, and with the other he held a pad of rag pressed against her exquisite face. The man looked as strong as a gorilla, and with his hideous face wrinkled in a confident leer he was not unlike one.

Roland rushed upon him. The powerful brute, not deigning to loosen his hold of the girl, met the onslaught by turning his great heavy back and planting his feet a little wider on the ground. No doubt he had cunningly noted that his assailant was an Englishman, and therefore unlikely to use the knife or pistol; also it probably did not occur to him that any man would be fool enough to risk a serious conflict with himself for the sake of a passing girl.

He discovered his error when Roland, oblivious alike to fear and the Queensberry Rules, delivered a violent kick on his body which made him quiver. In another instant Roland's fingers, reaching round his head from behind, had found his eyes and were pressing into the sockets.

It was not a pretty mode of attack, but it was a remarkably effective one. With a startled yell the man let the girl go, and dashed up his hands to relieve the agony in his eyes. That was all that Roland desired. He took away his fingers, and before the footpad, snarling like a beast, could turn to wreak vengeance on his torturer, Roland's right arm was round his throat, forcing back his head, and holding him in a grip which is fatal if continued to the bitter end.

Choking and flustered, the ruffian drove his sledge-hammer elbow viciously backwards into Roland's ribs, and the blow would assuredly have crushed in his body had the full weight of it reached him. Shaken and winded though he was by the glancing blow, Roland held on grimly while the fellow twisted and writhed and tore at his arm with hands and nails. His frenzied struggles

merely served to tighten the vice and hasten his collapse.

When the brute's carcass went limp, Roland let it drop, and fell on his knees beside the girl. Her white, still face and flaccid limbs scared Roland, but what made him feel most helpless was that he knew no name by which to call her back to life. Fortunately, his timely arrival on the scene had saved her from a heavier dose of chloroform, and when presently she opened her eyes of her own accord and looked up into his with a puzzled little stare, he felt as though a sentence of death had been lifted from his own shoulders.

"Everything's all right," he said, soothingly—his arm was round her, and her head was against his shoulder. "You'll feel better in a minute. I sha'n't go away."

With a little sigh of comfort she closed her eyes again. He would not have changed places with an emperor.

Young and vigorous as she was, her forces came back rapidly. In two or three minutes (he could almost have wished it an age) she sat up straight, and he took away his arm. When she was ready to stand he helped her up, and, tucking her arm under his, took her back to the stairhead—he dared not leave her out of his sight. Propped against the parapet, she sat on the topmost step while he went down and retrieved her handbag. Nobody was about at that time of night. He left the ruffians lying.

Hurrying back, he found her sleepy and silent, but she clung tightly to his arm, and that was enough for Roland. They had not gone far, walking slowly, when they heard cheerful voices. The girl stopped to listen, then took away her hand.

"I know these people," she spoke so wearily. "I'll go with them. I'm all right now, thank you."

Her voice had fallen to a whisper, and she hesitated as though she were searching for words which she was too tired to find. But she touched his arm, and her eyes shone in the darkness.

"Thank you," she whispered again. He took her hands in his and put them to his lips—the perfume of her was balm from the meadows of paradise.

As he swung down the hill he scrutinized the new-comers and saw that they were decent English folk; then he halted in the shadow until they hailed her and carried her off with acclamation. Passing the stairhead he noticed that the ruffians had disappeared.

DAY by day and night by night Roland watched and sought for her in the Casino.

Why did she not come back to him? Had she forgotten? Could the magic of attraction be so one-sided that she was the flower of all the world to him and he to her a wayside weed?

All his elation had evaporated now. No longer he felt that it was his to ride to triumph on Fortune's winged steed. With a gambler's superstitious sensitiveness he felt—he knew—that the luck which had directed his hand when she was by his side would serve him no more.

Every day he lost money at the tables. Even as on that supreme night he could do nothing wrong, so now he could do nothing right. His great winnings dribbled away, his own small funds were also quickly gone, and then, when he might still have left the place with money in his pocket—the money that was not his own—he played on blindly, held to the tables by the spell of memory.

Thus his doom came inexorably upon him. One night when the Rooms were closing he stood up without coin or counter to his name. His hour had struck; respite was at an end; he was face to face with destiny, and he knew it. That night Roland Anketill looked into his own soul.

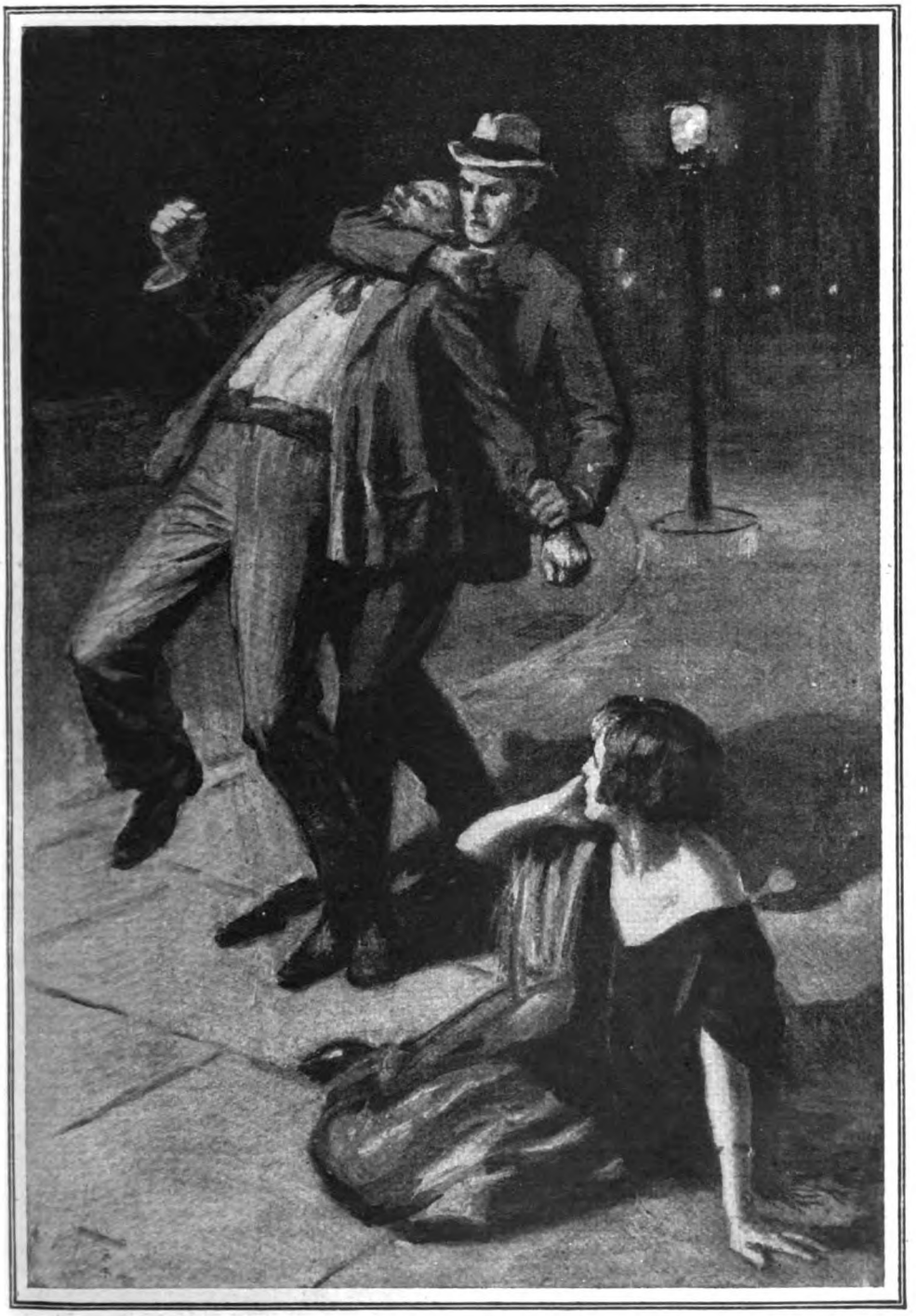
Craving for solitude and darkness, he wandered down to the seashore, where a rough and unfrequented path runs round the Bay of Hercules to Cabbé-Roquebrune. There black horror closed in upon him—horror of humiliation, shame, remorse, despair. There with frenzied hand he tore away at last the screen of make-believe, and saw himself a forger and a thief, perceived without disguise how he had tricked a friend, betrayed his trust, and smirched his honourable calling. What a despicable knave he had been, and what a fool!

As always, in the background of his thoughts hovered the girl he worshipped. For the last time he gazed upon her in fancy as he had seen her on the pinnacle night of his life. Beautiful and remote, she smiled upon him still with answering friendly eyes, but she did not know—she did not know! From the pit of his abasement he saw her exalted on a height where he could never reach her.

It was then that he bade farewell to her, and to life.

In the darkness he missed his footing at a gap in the path, and barely saved himself from falling on to the rocks below. "Not there!" he muttered, and then, as he could get no farther, he turned back towards Monte Carlo, made his way to the stone stairs, blundered through the puddle, and started to climb.

He reached the top, and, without pausing, went on past slumbering villas and tiny cottages clinging to the hillside, until he came to the higher slopes. His purpose now was fixed: to escape from what he could never



Before the footpad could turn, Roland's right arm was round his throat, forcing back his head.

endure, to atone for what he could never undo!

Presently he became aware of a fresher breeze playing upon his leaden brow. He looked up and saw that he had reached the summit. And there before him rose the dim and mighty shape of the Tower of Augustus, and nearer by, pink and ghostly in the first glimmer of the dawn, stood the hotel he had often seen from Monte Carlo far below.

The world of men was utterly still, and it suited him so. As soon as he could find his way he searched the ground for the place he wanted, and discovered it at the margin of the greensward in front of the hotel. The cliff dropped sheer.

A little iron railing protected the spot, and he clambered along the outer side of it; then he turned carefully and, holding on to the spikes behind him, leaned out and surveyed the precipice below. Satisfied, he straightened himself, and his gaze travelled slowly round over the beautiful dim panorama of valley, wood, and mountain, and the dark-stretching waters of the sea.

Presently he raised his eyes to the great vault of heaven; his lips moved. He drew a deep breath, took his hands from the railing, and stretched out his arms before him, poising himself over the abyss.

"STOP!" Calm but firm, and very clear in the morning stillness, came the word.

Mechanically Roland dropped his arms and grasped the railing behind him. With an eerie thrill in his heart he turned his head in the direction of the sound. But he saw nobody; the greensward was as empty as before.

"Wait—I'm coming!"

That was surely no spirit voice—nay, it was the voice which he loved more than all the voices of heaven or earth. Looking up, he saw at a window of the hotel a girlish figure in white with flowing hair. As soon as she knew that he had seen her, she disappeared, and a moment later he heard the sound of drawing bolts.

She came quickly towards him over the grass. She had thrown a cloak over her night attire, but her head and feet were bare, and her hair blew loose about her face. Roland gazed upon her fascinated.

"Wait a moment. I want to ask you something." Her voice was music.

She came right up to the railings and looked into his haggard face.

"Why, it's you! My knight-errant! What are you doing now? Worshipping the rising sun?" She spoke lightly, but there was a quiver in her voice. Her presence was like a garden of sweet scents.

"Please come round to this side; you make me nervous standing there. I'm sure those railings are not safe!"

She put a gentle hand upon his shoulder, and kept it there while he edged obediently along the railing. Then she took his arm and led him away to a fallen block of stone from the Tower.

"Now tell me all about it."

"I can't," said Roland, in gnawing misery. "I daren't. I ought not to be talking to you. I ought not to be alive—and I shouldn't be if you hadn't come."

"How can you be so wicked!" she answered, warmly, "and unkind, too. Before I had ever thanked you! What should I have felt like? Now tell me everything, or else I shall think you a coward—and I know you're not that. Daddy brought me up here to La Turbie and made me promise not to go to Monte for a fortnight. We were going down to-night to find you. I told him all about you. He said you must be a splendid fellow!"

Roland groaned, but her persuasion was subtle, and, after all, had he not already tasted the uttermost dregs of degradation? A little more would make no difference—and he would never see her again. So he unbared his soul to her, concealing nothing, palliating nothing, from the day of his transgression to the moment when she called to him on the brink at the breaking of the dawn.

She listened in silence, and if there were tears in her eyes when he came to the end, he did not see them. With bowed head he steeled himself to receive her verdict of contempt—or would she leave him without deigning even so much as that? No great matter—it would soon be ended.

Yet, when she spoke, there was neither scorn nor pity in her voice, but only the infinite kindness of man's eternal comrade:—

"I am so glad I saw you. Wasn't it strange? I couldn't sleep—the first time for I don't know how long. I was just thinking about you—but I didn't suppose that lunatic at the railings could be the nice, brave fellow who rescued me from those thieves. Do you believe in Providence? I do!" Then, after a pause: "I think you have been very silly—and tricky, too. I don't like tricks. You must go home at once and put it right."

"I'd rather finish it here," said Roland, despondently.

"Finish it!" she flashed. "How can you finish it without paying the man his money? Don't talk rubbish. Now, wait here while I get some of those notes we won at the Casino; I haven't touched them. You'll take them and you'll go straight back and make a clean breast of it to that good man. You'll do that, won't you?"

She came right up to the railings and looked into his haggard face. "Why, it's you! My knight-errant! What are you doing now?"

Then, for the first time, she remembered her strange costume. She jumped up in alarm, crying, " But it's daylight, and it will never do for me to be sitting here like this ! " And with a mischievous twinkle in her eye, she darted away across the grass to the hotel.

" Listen," she said, when she came back—she had put on shoes and stockings and a frock, and tied up her wayward hair—" look me in the face now. Promise me that you'll do as I say "—her voice dropped—" for my sake."

It was the last call of an intrepid woman's heart, battling debonairly for the soul of a man. As one drawn up from the depths of the sea by a rescuing hand, Roland heaved a great sighing breath, and in the eyes which he raised to hers at last she saw a man reborn.

" I promise."

" I trust you. Now give me your address ; daddy will have to write to you. And remember you're going to make good."

ROLAND'S holidays had still a few days to run when he got back to town. He lost no time in ringing up Coveney, and learned that he would be home next day. On the morning after, Roland presented himself at the house.

Coveney was delighted to see him, but the heartiness of his welcome, so far from smoothing the way for Roland, only served to intensify his mortification and augment the difficulty of his ordeal. But her face was always before his eyes, her words were in his ears, and he went through his confession without flinching, relating the whole pitiful story of his escapade, and only suppressing, so far as he could, the irrelevant incidents of the claw-fingered female at the tables and the robbers on the high path.

Coveney listened attentively, putting a brief question here and there, but expressing neither surprise nor condemnation. Roland was prepared for both in ample measure, but he flushed with shame when, at the end of the narrative, Coveney rose without a word and walked to the study door.

Yet, could it have been otherwise ? Had he not forfeited all claim to the company of honest men ? But he had kept his promise, thank Heaven.

Coveney opened the door, put out his head, and called, or, rather, whooped, " Bar-by ! "

" Daddy ! " came the singsong answer.

Roland started, and leant forward in his chair, listening. Coveney at the door was apparently suppressing an entirely ill-timed smile.

There was a quick patter of feet on the stairs, then a pause, and a little thump as if somebody about as light as a canary had taken the last half-dozen steps in a flying leap.

She shot into the room like a small hurricane, glanced at her father, and came to Roland with hand outstretched and a little pink flush on her cheeks.

" I knew I could trust you," was all she said.

Roland had had the wit to jump to his feet, but that was all. Amazement robbed him of speech. Coveney, in the background, was enjoying the situation, but now he too came forward and shook Roland warmly by the hand.

" Forgive me, Anketill "—he was quite serious now—" I had no idea it was you—I didn't even know you were in Monte—till Barby brought in the name of her knight-errant, as she called you, and then it was too late ; she had sent you home, the high-handed little tyrant ! " He put his arm round Barbara and drew her close. " Why, my boy, you have put me in your debt for evermore. But for you this little girl might not be here now. She's everything to me, Anketill ; she's all I have, but she's an independent, tyrannical little minx—that's just what she is, and I give her too much freedom—much too much ! "

" No, you don't ! " broke in the minx ; " I was unlucky, that's all—and lucky, too," with a flash of her eyes at Roland. " You're getting maudlin, daddy. Now, come along, you fellows, be sensible and serious. We three have lots to talk about." And she plumped herself down on the sofa with a man on either side of her.

Coveney for his part insisted that he had dared Roland to do what he had done, and refused to call it anything but a joke. But Roland knew too well that it was nothing of the kind, and Barbara, who looked upon the world with eyes of truth, knew the same. So Roland abased himself anew, vowed full reparation, and his spirit was cleansed.

In friendly conclave it was resolved that he should resign his position at the bank without delay, and seek new health and fortune in Kenya, where Coveney had a large landed interest in the salubrious highlands of that favoured and rapidly-advancing province.

" WE'LL come and look you up, my boy, in a year or two's time—you may depend upon that," Coveney assured him before the ship cast off.

" Of course we will, Roland," added Barbara. " Sooner, perhaps—if we are wanted," and in her kindling eyes he read a message which he could not mistake.

JEEVES TAKES CHARGE

by

P. G. WODEHOUSE

ILLUSTRATED BY A. WALLIS MILLS

I KNOW lots of people think I'm much too dependent on my man Jeeves. My Aunt Agatha has even gone so far as to call him my keeper. Well, it's quite true that I leave most of the thinking to him; but what I say is: Why not? Jeeves, if he cared to take a whirl at it, could be Prime Minister or something to-morrow. The man's a genius. From the collar upward he stands alone. I gave up trying to run my own affairs within a week of his coming to me. That was about half-a-dozen years ago, directly after the rather rummy business of Florence Craye, my Uncle Willoughby's book, and Edwin, the Boy Scout.

The thing really began when I got back to Easeby, my uncle's place in Shropshire. I was spending a week or so there, as I generally did in the summer; and I had had to break my visit to come back to London to get a new valet. I had found Meadowes, the fellow I had taken to Easeby with me, sneaking my silk socks, a thing no chappie of spirit could stick at any price. It transpiring, moreover, that he had looted a lot of other things here and there about the place, I was reluctantly compelled to hand the misguided blighter the mitten and go to London to ask the registry office to scare up another specimen for my approval. They sent me Jeeves.

I shall always remember the morning he came. It so happened that the night before I had been present at a rather cheery little supper, and I was feeling pretty rocky. On top of this I was trying to read a book Florence Craye had given me. She had been one of the house-party at Easeby, and two or three days before I left we had got engaged. I was due back at the end of the week, and I knew she would expect me to have finished the book by then. You see, she was particularly keen on boosting me up a bit nearer her own plane of intellect. She was a girl with a wonderful profile, but steeped to the gills in serious purpose. I can't give you a better idea of the way things stood than by telling you that the book she'd given me to read was called "Types of Ethical Theory," and that when I opened it at random I struck a page beginning:—

"The postulate or common understanding involved in speech is certainly co-extensive, in the obligation it carries, with the social organism of which language is the instrument, and the ends of which it is an effort to subserve."

All perfectly true, no doubt; but not the sort of thing to spring on a lad with a morning head.

I was doing my best to skim through this bright little volume when the bell rang. I crawled off the sofa and opened the door. A kind of darkish sort of respectful Johnnie stood without.

"I was sent by the agency, sir," he said. "I was given to understand that you required a valet."

I'd have preferred an undertaker; but I told him to stagger in, and he floated noiselessly through the doorway like a healing zephyr. That impressed me from the start. Meadowes had had flat feet and used to clump. This fellow didn't seem to

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have any feet at all. He just streamed in. He had a grave, sympathetic face, as if he, too, knew what it was to sup with the lads; and there was a look in his eyes, as we stood there giving each other the mutual north-to-south, that seemed to say: "Courage, Cuthbert! Chump though you be, have no fear, for I will look after you!"

"Excuse me, sir," he said, gently.

Then he seemed to flicker, and wasn't there any longer. I heard him moving about in the kitchen, and presently he came back with a glass on a tray.

"If you would drink this, sir," he said, with a kind of bedside manner, rather like the royal doctor shooting the bracer into the sick prince. "It is a little preparation of my own invention. It is the dark meat-sauce that gives it its colour. The raw egg makes it nutritious. The red pepper gives it its bite. Gentlemen have told me they have found it extremely invigorating after a late evening."

I would have clutched at anything that looked like a life-line that morning. I swallowed the stuff. For a moment I felt as if somebody had touched off a bomb inside the old bean, and was strolling down my throat with a lighted torch, and then everything seemed suddenly to get all right. The sun shone in through the window; birds twittered in the tree-tops; and, generally speaking, hope dawned once more.

"You're engaged!" I said, as soon as I could say anything.

I perceived clearly that this lad was one of the world's workers, the sort no home should be without.

"Thank you, sir. My name is Jeeves."

"You can start in at once?"

"Immediately, sir."

"Because I'm due down at Easeby, in Shropshire, the day after to-morrow."

"Very good, sir." He looked past me at the mantelpiece. "That is an excellent likeness of Lady Florence Craye, sir. It is two years since I saw her ladyship. I was at one time in Lord Worplesdon's employment. I tendered my resignation because I could not see eye to eye with his lordship in his desire to dine in dress trousers, a flannel shirt, and a shooting coat."

He couldn't tell me anything I didn't know about the old boy's eccentricity. This Lord Worplesdon was Florence's father. He was the old buster who, a few years later, came down to breakfast one morning, lifted the first cover he saw, said "Eggs! Eggs! Eggs! Damn all eggs!" in an overwrought sort of voice, and instantly legged it for France, never to return to the bosom of the family. This, mind you, being a bit of luck for the bosom of the family, for old Worplesdon had the worst temper in the Midland counties.

I had known the family ever since I was a kid, and from boyhood up he had put the fear of death into me. Time, the great healer, could never remove from my memory the occasion when he found me—then a stripling of fifteen—smoking one of his big special cigars in the stables. He got after me with a hunting-crop just at the moment when I was beginning to realize that what I wanted most on earth was solitude and repose, and chased me more than a mile across difficult country. If there was a flaw, so to speak, in the pure joy of being engaged to Florence, it was the fact that she rather took after her father, and one was never certain when she might erupt. She had a wonderful profile, though.

"Lady Florence and I are engaged, Jeeves," I said.

"Indeed, sir?"

You know, there was a kind of rummy something about his manner. Perfectly all right and all that, but not what you'd call chirpy. It somehow gave me the impression that he wasn't keen on Florence. Well, of course, it wasn't my business. I supposed that while he had been valeting old Worplesdon she must have trodden on his toes in some way. Florence was a dear girl and, seen sideways, most awfully good-looking; but if she had a fault it was a tendency to be a bit imperious with the domestic staff.

AT this point in the proceedings there was another ring at the front door. Jeeves shimmered out and came back with a telegram. I opened it. It ran:—

"Return immediately. Extremely urgent. Catch first train.—Florence."

"Rum!" I said.

"Sir?"

"Oh, nothing!"

It shows how little I knew Jeeves in those days that I didn't go a bit deeper into the matter with him. Nowadays I would never dream of reading a rummy communication without asking him what he thought of it. And this one was devilish odd. What I mean is, Florence knew I was going back to Easeby the day after to-morrow, anyway; so why the hurry call? Something must have happened, of course; but I couldn't see what on earth it could be.

"Jeeves," I said, "we shall be going down to Easeby this afternoon. Can you manage it?"

"Certainly, sir."

"You can get your packing done and all that?"

"Without any difficulty, sir. Which suit will you wear for the journey?"

"This one."

I had on a rather sprightly young check that morning, to which I was a good deal attached; I fancied it, in fact, more than a little. It was perhaps rather sudden, till you got used to it, but, nevertheless, an extremely sound effort, which many lads at the club and elsewhere had admired unrestrainedly.

"Very good, sir."

Again there was that kind of rummy something in his manner. It was the way he said it, don't you know. He didn't like the suit. I pulled myself together to assert myself. Something seemed to tell me that, unless I was jolly careful and nipped this lad in the bud, he would be starting to boss me. He had the aspect of a distinctly resolute blighter.

Well, I wasn't going to have any of that sort of thing, by Jove! I'd seen so many cases of chappies who had become perfect slaves to their valets. I remember poor old Aubrey Fothergill telling me—with absolute tears in his eyes, poor chap!—one night at the club, that he had been compelled to give up a favourite pair of brown shoes simply because Meekyn, his man, disapproved of them. You have to keep these fellows in their place, don't you know. You have to work the good old iron-hand-in-the-velvet-glove wheeze. If you give them a what's-its-name, they take a thingummy.

"Don't you like this suit, Jeeves?" I said, coldly.

"Oh, yes, sir!"

"Well, what don't you like about it?"

"It is a very nice suit, sir."

"Well, what's wrong with it? Out with it, dash it!"

"If I might make the suggestion, sir, a simple brown or blue, with a hint of some quiet twill——"

"What absolute rot!"

"Very good, sir."

"Perfectly blithering, my dear man!"

"As you say, sir."

I felt as if I had stepped on the place where the last stair ought to have been, but wasn't. I felt defiant, if you know what I mean, and there didn't seem anything to defy.

"All right, then," I said.

"Yes, sir."

And then he went away to collect his kit, while I started in again on "Types of Ethical Theory" and took a stab at a chapter headed "Idio-psychological Ethics."

I swallowed the stuff, and for a moment I felt as if somebody had touched off a bomb inside the old bean.

Most of the way down in the train that afternoon I was wondering what could be up at the other end. I simply couldn't see what could have happened. Easeby wasn't one of those country houses you read about in the society novels, where young girls are lured on to play baccarat and then skinned to the bone of their jewellery, and so on. The house-party I had left had consisted entirely of law-abiding chappies like myself.

Besides, my uncle wouldn't have let anything of that kind go on in his house. He was a rather stiff, precise sort of old boy, who liked a quiet life. He was just finishing a history of the family or something, which he had been working on for the last year, and didn't stir much from the library. He was rather a good instance of what they say about its being a good scheme for a

chappie to sow his wild oats. I'd been told that in his youth Uncle Willoughby had been a bit of a rounder. You would never have thought it to look at him now.

When I got to the house, Oakshott, the butler, told me that Florence was in her room, watching her maid pack. Apparently there was a dance on at a house about twenty miles away that night, and she was motoring over with some of the Easeby lot and would be away some nights. Oakshott said she had told him to tell her the moment I arrived; so I trickled into the smoking-room and waited, and presently in she came. A glance showed me that she was perturbed, and even peeved. Her eyes had a goggly look, and altogether she appeared considerably pipped.

"Darling!" I said, and attempted the good old embrace; but she side-stepped like a bantam weight.

"Don't!"

"What's the matter?"

"Everything's the matter! Bertie, you remember asking me, when you left, to make myself pleasant to your uncle?"

"Yes."

The idea being, of course, that as I was more or less dependent on Uncle Willoughby I couldn't very well marry without his approval. And though I knew he wouldn't have any objection to Florence, having known her father since they were at Oxford together, I hadn't wanted to take any chances; so I had told her to make an effort to fascinate the old boy.

"You told me it would please him particularly if I asked him to read me some of his history of the family."

"Wasn't he pleased?"

"He was delighted. He finished writing the thing yesterday afternoon, and read me nearly all of it last night. I have never had such a shock in my life! The book is an outrage. It is impossible. It is horrible!"

"But—dash it!—the family weren't so bad as all that."

"It is not a history of the family at all. Your uncle has written his reminiscences! He calls them 'Recollections of a Long Life'!"

I BEGAN to understand. As I say, Uncle Willoughby had been somewhat on the tabasco side as a young man, and it began to look as if he might have turned out something pretty fruity if he had started recollecting his long life.

"If half of what he has written is true," said Florence, "your uncle's youth must have been perfectly appalling! The moment we began to read he plunged straight into a most scandalous story of how he and my father were thrown out of a music-hall in 1887!"

"Why?"

"I decline to tell you why!"

It must have been something pretty bad. It took a lot to make them chuck people out of music-halls in 1887.

"Your uncle specifically states that father had drunk a quart and a half of champagne before beginning the evening," she went on. "The book is full of stories like that. There is a dreadful one about Lord Emsworth."

"Lord Emsworth! Not the one we know? Not the one at Blandings?" A most respectable old Johnnie, don't you know. Doesn't do a thing nowadays but dig in the garden with a spud.

"The very same! That is what makes the book so unspeakable. It is full of stories about people one knows who are the essence of propriety to-day, but who seem to have behaved, when they were in London in the 'eighties, in a manner that would not have been tolerated in the fo'c'sle of a whaler! Your uncle seems to remember everything disgraceful that happened to anybody when he was in his early twenties. There is a story about Sir Stanley Gervase-Gervase at Rosherville Gardens which is ghastly in its perfection of detail. It seems that Sir Stanley—but I can't tell you!"

"Have a dash!"

"No!"

"Oh, well, I shouldn't worry. No publisher will print the book if it's as bad as all that."

"On the contrary, your uncle told me that all negotiations are settled with Riggs and Ballinger, and he's sending off the manuscript to-morrow for immediate publication. They make a special thing of that sort of book. They published Lady Carnaby's 'Memories of Eighty Interesting Years.'"

"I read 'em!"

"Well, then, when I tell you that Lady Carnaby's Memories are simply not to be compared with your uncle's Recollections, you will understand my state of mind. And father appears in nearly every story in the book! I am horrified at the things he did when he was a young man!"

"What's to be done?"

"The manuscript must be intercepted before it reaches Riggs and Ballinger, and destroyed!"

I sat up.

This sounded rather sporting.

"How are you going to do it?" I inquired.

"How can I do it? Didn't I tell you the parcel goes off to-morrow? I am going

to the Murgatroyds' dance to-night and shall not be back till Monday. You must do it! That is why I telegraphed to you."

"What!"

She gave me a look.

"Do you mean to say you refuse to help me, Bertie?"

"No; but—I say!"

"It's quite simple."

"But even if I—— What I mean is—— Of course, anything I can do—but—if you know what I mean——"

"You say you want to marry me, Bertie?"

"Yes, of course; but still——"

For a moment she looked exactly like her old father.

"I will never marry you if those Recollections are published."

"But, Florence, old thing!"

"I mean it! You may look on it as a test, Bertie. If you have the resource and courage to carry this thing through, I will take it as evidence that you are not the vapid and shiftless person most people think you. If you fail I shall know that your Aunt Agatha was right when she called you a spineless invertebrate and advised me strongly not to marry you. It will be perfectly simple for you to intercept the manuscript, Bertie. It only requires a little resolution."

"But suppose Uncle Willoughby catches me at it? He'd cut me off with a bob!"

"If you care more for your uncle's money than for me——"

"No, no! Rather not!"

"Very well, then. The parcel containing the manuscript will, of course, be placed on the hall table to-morrow for Oakshott to take to the village with the letters. All you have to do is to take it away and destroy it. Then your uncle will think it has been lost in the post."

It sounded thin to me.

"Hasn't he got a copy of it?"

"No; it has not been typed. He is sending the manuscript just as he wrote it."

"But he could write it over again."

"As if he would have the energy!"

"But——"

"If you are going to do nothing but make absurd objections, Bertie——"

"I was only pointing things out, don't you know."

"Well, don't! Once and for all, will you do me this quite simple act of kindness?"

The way she put it gave me an idea.

"Why not get Edwin to do it? Keep it in the family, kind of, don't you know! Besides, it would be a boon to the kid."

A jolly bright idea it seemed to me. Edwin was her young brother, who was spending his holidays at Easeby. He was a ferret-faced kid, whom I had disliked since birth. As a matter of fact, talking of Recollections and Memories, it was young blighted Edwin who, nine years before, had led his father to where I was smoking his cigar and caused all the unpleasantness. He was fourteen now and had just joined the Boy Scouts. He was one of those thorough kids, and took his responsibilities pretty seriously. He was always in a sort of fever because he was dropping behind schedule with his daily acts of kindness. However hard he tried, he'd fall behind: and then you would find him prowling about the house, setting such a clip to try to catch up with himself that Easeby was rapidly becoming a perfect hell for man and beast.

The idea didn't seem to strike Florence.

"I shall do nothing of the kind, Bertie! I wonder you can't appreciate the compliment I am paying you—trusting you like this!"

"Oh, I see that all right; but what I mean is, Edwin would do it so much better than I would. These Boy Scouts are up to all sorts of dodges. They spoor, don't you know, and take cover and creep about, and what not."

"Bertie, will you or will you not do this perfectly trivial thing for me? If not, say so now, and let us end this farce of pretending that you care a snap of the fingers for me."

"Dear old soul, I love you devotedly!"

"Then will you or will you not——"

"Oh, all right!" I said. "All right! All right! All right!"

And then I tottered forth to think it over. I met Jeeves in the passage just outside.

"I beg your pardon, sir. I was endeavouring to find you."

"What's the matter?"

"I felt that I should tell you, sir, that somebody has been putting black polish on our brown walking shoes."

"What! Who? Why?"

"I could not say, sir."

"Can anything be done with them?"

"Nothing, sir."

"Damn!"

"Very good, sir."

I'VE often wondered since then how these murderer fellows manage to keep in shape while they're contemplating their next effort. I had a much simpler sort of job on hand, and the thought of it rattled me to such an extent in the night watches that I was a perfect wreck next day. Dark circles under the eyes—I give you my word! I had to call on Jeeves to rally round with one of those life-savers of his.

From breakfast on I felt like a bag-

snatcher at a railway station. I had to hang about waiting for the parcel to be put on the hall table, and it wasn't put. Uncle Willoughby was a fixture in the library, adding the finishing touches to the great work, I supposed, and the more I thought the thing over, the less I liked it. The chances against my pulling it off seemed about three to two, and the thought of what would happen if I didn't gave me cold shivers down the spine. Uncle Willoughby was a pretty mild sort of old boy, as a rule, but I've known him to cut up rough, and, by Jove! he was scheduled to extend himself if he caught me trying to get away with his life work.

It wasn't till nearly four that he toddled out of the library with the parcel under his arm, put it on the table, and toddled off again. I was hiding a bit to the south-east at the moment, behind a suit of armour. I bounded out and legged it for the table. Then I nipped upstairs to hide the swag. I charged in like a mustang and nearly stubbed my toe on young blighted Edwin, the Boy Scout. He was standing at the chest of drawers, confound him, messing about with my ties.

"Hello!" he said.

"What are you doing here?"

"I'm tidying your room. It's my last Saturday's act of kindness."

"Last Saturday's!"

"I'm five days behind. I was six till last night, but I polished your shoes!"

"Was it you——"

"Yes. Did you see them? I just happened to think of it. I was in here, looking round. Mr. Berkeley had this room while you were away. He left this morning. I thought perhaps he might have left something in it that I could have sent on. I've often done acts of kindness that way."

"You must be a comfort to one and all!"

It became more and more apparent to me that this infernal kid must somehow be turned out eftsoons or right speedily. I had hidden the parcel behind my back, and I didn't think he had seen it; but I wanted to get at that chest of drawers quick, before anyone else came along.

"I shouldn't bother about tidying the room," I said.

"I like tidying it. It's not a bit of trouble—really!"

"But it's quite tidy now."

"Not so tidy as I shall make it."

This was getting perfectly rotten! I didn't want to murder the kid, and yet there didn't seem any other way of shifting him. I pressed down the mental accelerator. The old lemon throbbed fiercely. I got an idea.

"There's something much kinder than that which you could do," I said. "You see that box of cigars? Take it down to the smoking-room and snip off the ends for me. That would save me no end of trouble. Stagger along, laddie!"

He seemed a bit doubtful; but he staggered. I shoved the parcel into a drawer, locked it, trousered the key, and felt better. I might be a chump, but—dash it!—I could out-general a mere kid with a face like a ferret! I went downstairs again. Just as I was passing the smoking-room door out curveted Edwin. It seemed to me that if he wanted to do a real act of kindness he would commit suicide.

"I'm snipping them," he said.

"Snip on! Snip on!"

"Do you like them snipped much, or only a bit?"

"Medium."

"All right. I'll be getting on, then."

"I should."

And we parted.

FELLOWS who know all about that sort of thing—detectives, and so on—will tell you that the most difficult thing in the world is to get rid of the body. I remember, as a kid, having to learn by heart a poem about a bird by the name of Eugene Aram, who had the deuce of a job in this respect. All I can recall of the actual poetry is the bit that goes:—

"Tum-tum, tum-tum, tum-tumty-tum!
I slew him, tum-tum-tum!"

But I recollect that the poor blighter spent much of his valuable time dumping the corpse into ponds and burying it, and what not, only to have it pop out at him again. It was about an hour after I had shoved the parcel into the drawer when I realized that I had let myself in for just the same sort of thing.

Florence had talked in an airy sort of way about destroying the manuscript; but when one came down to it, how the deuce can a chap destroy a great chunky mass of paper in somebody else's house in the middle of summer? I couldn't ask to have a fire in my bedroom, with the thermometer in the eighties. And if I didn't burn the thing how else could I get rid of it? Fellows on the battlefield eat despatches to keep them from falling into the hands of the enemy, but it would have taken me a year to eat Uncle Willoughby's Recollections.

I'm bound to say the problem absolutely baffled me. The only thing seemed to be to leave the parcel in the drawer and hope for the best.

I don't know whether you have ever experienced it, but it's a dashed unpleasant thing having a crime on one's conscience. Toward the end of the day the mere sight of the drawer began to depress me. I found myself getting all on edge ; and once, when Uncle Willoughby trickled silently into the smoking-room when I was alone there and spoke to me before I knew he was there, I broke the record for the sitting high jump.

I was wondering all the time when Uncle Willoughby would sit up and take notice. I didn't think he would have time to suspect that anything had gone wrong till Saturday morning, when he would be expecting, of course, to get the acknowledgment of the manuscript from the publishers. But early on Friday evening he came out of the library as I was passing and asked me to step in. He was looking considerably peeved.

"Bertie," he said—he always spoke in a precise sort of pompous kind of way—"an exceedingly disturbing thing has happened. As you know, I dispatched the manuscript of my book to Messrs. Riggs and Ballinger, the publishers, yesterday afternoon. It should have reached them by the first post this morning. Why I should have been uneasy I cannot say, but my mind was not altogether at rest respecting the safety of the parcel. I therefore telephoned to Messrs. Riggs and Ballinger a few moments back to make inquiries. To my consternation they informed me that they were not yet in receipt of my manuscript."

"Very rum!"

"I recollect distinctly placing it myself on the hall table in good time to be taken to the village. But here is a sinister thing. I have spoken to Oakshott, who took the rest of the letters to the post-office, and he cannot recall seeing it there. He is, indeed, unswerving in his assertions that when he went to the hall to collect the letters there was no parcel among them."

"Sounds funny!"

"Bertie, shall I tell you what I suspect?"

"What's that?"

"The suspicion will no doubt sound to you incredible, but it alone seems to fit the facts as we know them. I incline to the belief that the parcel has been stolen."

"Oh, I say! Surely not!"

"Wait! Hear me out. Though I have said nothing to you before, or to anyone else, concerning the matter, the fact remains that during the past few weeks a number of objects—some valuable, others not—have disappeared in this house. The conclusion to which one is irresistibly impelled is that we have a kleptomaniac in our midst. It is a peculiarity of kleptomania, as you are no doubt aware, that the subject is unable to differentiate between the intrinsic values of objects. He will purloin an old coat as readily as a diamond ring, or a tobacco pipe costing but a few shillings with the same eagerness as a purse of gold. The fact that this manuscript of mine could be of no possible value to any outside person convinces me that——"

"What are you doing here?"

"I'm tidying your room. It's my last Saturday's act of kindness."

"But, uncle, one moment; I know all about those

things that were stolen. It was Meadowes, my man, who pinched them. I caught him snaffling my silk socks. Right in the act, by Jove!"

He was tremendously impressed.

"You amaze me, Bertie! Send for the man at once and question him."

"But he isn't here. You see, directly I found that he was a sock-sneaker I gave him the boot. That's why I went to London—to get a new man."

"Then, if the man Meadowes is no longer in the house, it could not be he who purloined my manuscript. The whole thing is inexplicable."

After which we brooded for a bit. Uncle Willoughby pottered about the room, registering baffledness, while I sat sucking at a cigarette, feeling rather like a chappie I'd once read about in a book, who murdered another cove and hid the body under the dining-room table, and then had to be the life and soul of a dinner party, with it there all the time! My guilty secret oppressed me to such an extent that after a while I couldn't stick it any longer. I lit another cigarette and started for a stroll in the grounds, by way of cooling off.

IT was one of those still evenings you get in the summer, when you can hear a snail clear its throat a mile away. The sun was sinking over the hills and the gnats were fooling about all over the place, and everything smelled rather topping—what with the falling dew and so on—and I was just beginning to feel a little soothed by the peace of it all when suddenly I heard my name spoken.

"It's about Bertie!"

It was the loathsome voice of young blighted Edwin! For a moment I couldn't locate it. Then I realized that it came from the library. My stroll had taken me within a few yards of the open window.

I had often wondered how those Johnnies in books did it—I mean the fellows with whom it was the work of a moment to do about a dozen things that ought to have taken them about ten minutes. But, as a matter of fact, it was the work of a moment with me to chuck away my cigarette, swear a bit, leap about ten yards, dive into a bush that stood near the library window, and stand there with my ears flapping. I was as certain as I've ever been of anything that all sorts of rotten things were in the offing.

"About Bertie?" I heard Uncle Willoughby say.

"About Bertie and your parcel. I heard you talking to him just now. I believe he's got it."

When I tell you that just as I heard these frightful words a fairly substantial beetle of sorts dropped from the bush down the back of my neck, and I couldn't even stir to squash the same, you will understand that I felt pretty rotten. Everything seemed against me.

"What do you mean, boy? I was discussing the disappearance of my manuscript with Bertie only a moment back, and he professed himself as perplexed by the mystery as myself."

"Well, I was in his room yesterday afternoon, doing him an act of kindness, and he came in with a parcel. I could see it, though he tried to keep it behind his back. And then he asked me to go to the smoking-room and snip some cigars for him; and about two minutes afterward he came down—and he wasn't carrying anything. So it must be in his room."

I understand they deliberately teach these dashed Boy Scouts to cultivate their powers of observation and deduction and what not. Devilish thoughtless and inconsiderate of them, I call it. Look at the trouble it causes!

"It sounds incredible!" said Uncle Willoughby, thereby bucking me up a trifle.

"Shall I go and look in his room?" asked young blighted Edwin. "I'm sure the parcel's there."

"But what could be his motive for perpetrating this extraordinary theft?"

"Perhaps he's a—what you said just now."

"A kleptomaniac? Impossible!"

"It might have been Bertie who took all those things from the very start," suggested the little brute, hopefully. "He may be like Raffles."

"Raffles?"

"He's a chap in a book who went about pinching things."

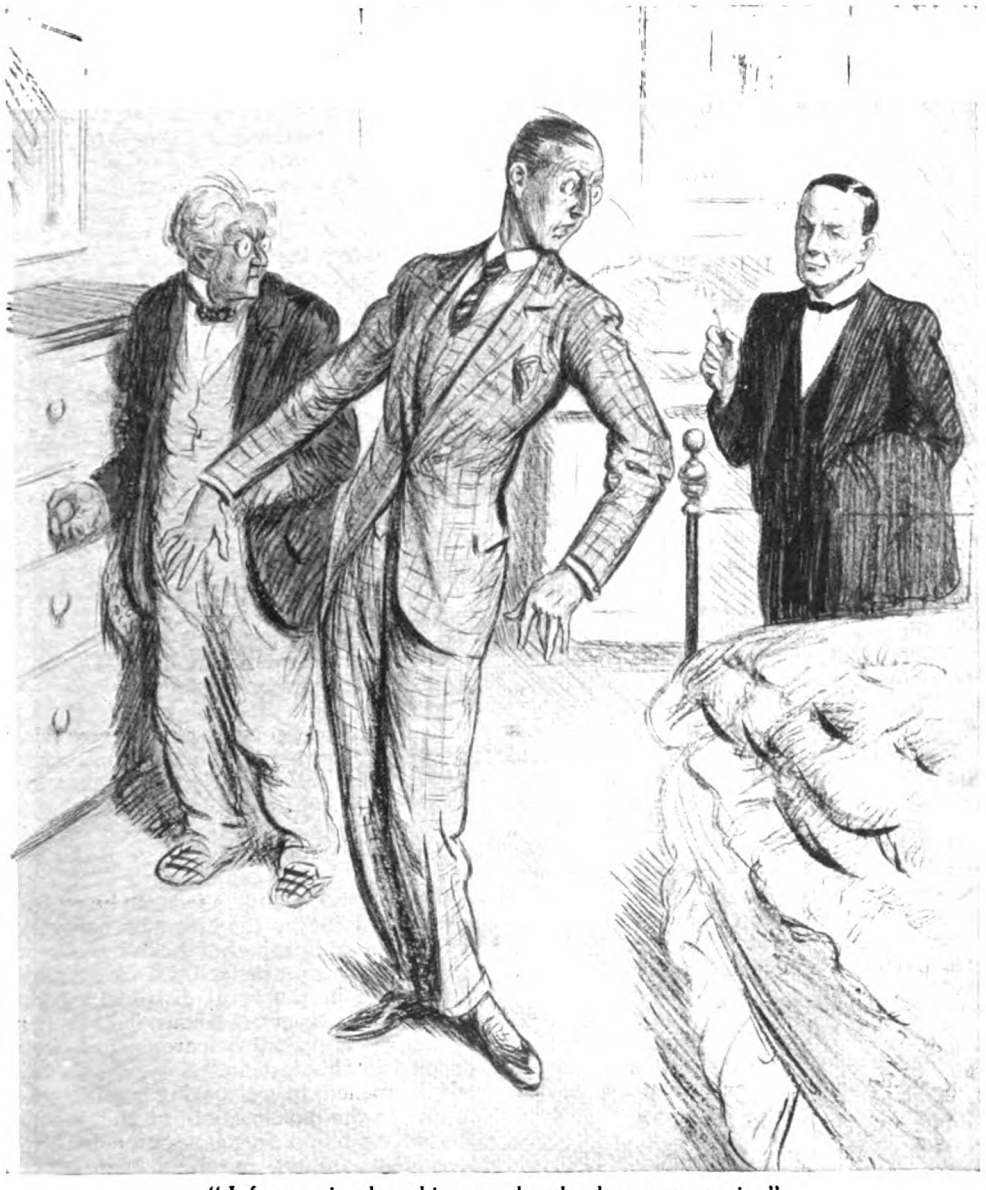
"I cannot believe that Bertie would—ah—go about pinching things."

"Well, I'm sure he's got the parcel I'll tell you what you might do. You might say that Mr. Berkeley wired that he had left something here. He had Bertie's room, you know. You might say you wanted to look for it."

"That would be possible. I——"

I didn't wait to hear any more. Things were getting too hot. I sneaked softly out of my bush and raced for the front door I sprinted up to my room and made for the drawer where I had put the parcel. And then I found I hadn't the key. It wasn't for the deuce of a time that I recollected I had shifted it to my evening trousers the night before and must have forgotten to take it out again.

Where the dickens were my evening



**"I fancy, sir, that this must be the key you require."
It was Jeeves. I could have massacred the man.**

things ? I had looked all over the place before I remembered that Jeeves must have taken them away to brush. To leap at the bell and ring it was, with me, the work of a moment. I had just rung it when there was a footstep outside, and in came Uncle Willoughby.

"Oh, Bertie ! " he said, without a blush, "I have—ah—received a telegram from Berkeley, who occupied this room in your absence, asking me to forward him his—er—his cigarette-case, which, it would appear, he inadvertently omitted to take with him when he left the house. I cannot find it downstairs ; and it has, therefore, occurred to me that he may have left it in this room. I will—er—just take a look round."

It was one of the most disgusting spectacles I've ever seen—this white-haired old man, who should have been thinking of the hereafter, standing there lying like an actor.

"I haven't seen it anywhere," I said.

"Nevertheless, I will search. I must—ah—spare no effort."

"I should have seen it if it had been here—what?"

"It may have escaped your notice. It is—er—possibly in one of the drawers."

He began to nose about. He pulled out drawer after drawer, pottering round like an old bloodhound, and babbling from time to time about Berkeley and his cigarette-case in a way that struck me as perfectly ghastly. I just stood there, losing weight every moment.

Then he came to the drawer where the parcel was.

"This appears to be locked," he said, rattling the handle.

"Yes; I shouldn't bother about that one. It—it's—er—locked, and all that sort of thing."

"You have not the key?"

A soft, respectful voice spoke behind me.

"I fancy, sir, that this must be the key you require. It was in the pocket of your evening trousers."

It was Jeeves. He had shimmered in, carrying my evening things, and was standing there holding out the key. I could have massacred the man.

"Thank you," said my uncle.

"Not at all, sir."

The next moment Uncle Willoughby had opened the drawer. I shut my eyes.

"No," said Uncle Willoughby, "there is nothing here. The drawer is empty. Thank you, Bertie. I hope I have not disturbed you. I fancy—er—Berkeley must have taken his case with him after all."

When he had gone I shut the door carefully. Then I turned to Jeeves. The man was putting my evening things out on a chair.

"Er—Jeeves!"

"Sir?"

"Oh, nothing."

It was deuced difficult to know how to begin.

"Er—Jeeves!"

"Sir?"

"Did you—— Was there—— Have you by chance——"

"I removed the parcel this morning, sir."

"Oh!—ah!—why?"

"I considered it more prudent, sir."

I mused for a while.

"Of course, I suppose all this seems tolerably rummy to you, Jeeves?"

"Not at all, sir. I chanced to overhear you and Lady Florence speaking of the matter the other evening, sir."

"Did you, by Jove?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well—er—Jeeves, I think that, on the whole, if you were to—as it were—freeze on to that parcel until we get back to London——"

"Exactly, sir."

"And then we might—er—so to speak—chuck it away somewhere—what?"

"Precisely, sir."

"I'll leave it in your hands."

"Entirely, sir."

"You know, Jeeves, you're by way of being rather a topper."

"I endeavour to give satisfaction, sir."

"One in a million, by Jove!"

"It is very kind of you to say so, sir."

"Well, that's about all, then, I think."

"Very good, sir."

FLORENCE came back on Monday. I didn't see her till we were all having tea in the hall. It wasn't till the crowd had cleared away a bit that we got a chance of having a word together.

"Well, Bertie?" she said.

"It's all right."

"You have destroyed the manuscript?"

"Not exactly; but——"

"What do you mean?"

"I mean I haven't absolutely——"

"Bertie, your manner is furtive!"

"It's all right. It's this way——"

And I was just going to explain how things stood when out of the library came leaping Uncle Willoughby, looking as braced as a two-year-old. The old boy was a changed man.

"A most remarkable thing, Bertie! I have just been speaking with Mr. Riggs on the telephone, and he tells me he received my manuscript by the first post this morning. I cannot imagine what can have caused the delay. Our postal facilities are extremely inadequate in the rural districts. I shall write to headquarters about it. It is insufferable if valuable parcels are to be delayed in this fashion."

I happened to be looking at Florence's profile at the moment, and at this juncture she swung round and gave me a look that went right through me like a knife. Uncle Willoughby meandered back to the library and there was a silence that you could have dug bits out of with a spoon.

"I can't understand it," I said at last. "I can't understand it, by Jove!"

"I can. I can understand it perfectly, Bertie! Your heart failed you. Rather than risk offending your uncle, you——"

"No, no! Absolutely!"

"You preferred to lose me rather than risk losing the money. Perhaps you did not think I meant what I said. I meant every word. Our engagement is ended."

"But—I say!"

"Not another word!"

"But, Florence, old thing!"

"I do not wish to hear any more. I see now that your Aunt Agatha was perfectly right. I consider that I have had a very lucky escape. There was a time when I thought that, with patience, you might be moulded into something worth while. I see now that you are impossible!"

And she popped off, leaving me to pick up the pieces. When I had collected the *débris* to some extent I went to my room and rang for Jeeves. He came in looking as if nothing had happened or was ever going to happen. He was the calmest thing in captivity.

"Jeeves!" I yelled. "Jeeves, that parcel has arrived in London!"

"Yes, sir?"

"Did you send it?"

"Yes, sir. I acted for the best, sir. I think that both you and Lady Florence overestimated the danger of people being offended at being mentioned in Sir Willoughby's Recollections. It has been my experience, sir, that the normal person enjoys seeing his or her name in print, irrespective of what is said about them. I have an aunt, sir, who a few years ago was a martyr to swollen limbs. She tried Walkinshaw's Supreme Ointment and obtained considerable relief—so much so that she sent them an unsolicited testimonial. Her pride at seeing her photograph in the daily papers in connection with descriptions of her lower limbs before taking, which were nothing less than revolting, was so intense that it led me to believe that publicity, of whatever sort, is what nearly everybody desires. Moreover, if you have ever studied psychology, sir, you will know that respectable old gentlemen are by no means averse to having it advertised that they were extremely wild in their youth. I have an uncle——"

I cursed his aunts and his uncles and him and all the rest of the family.

"Do you know that Lady Florence has broken off her engagement with me?"

"Indeed, sir?"

Not a bit of sympathy! I might have been telling him it was a fine day.

"You're sacked!"

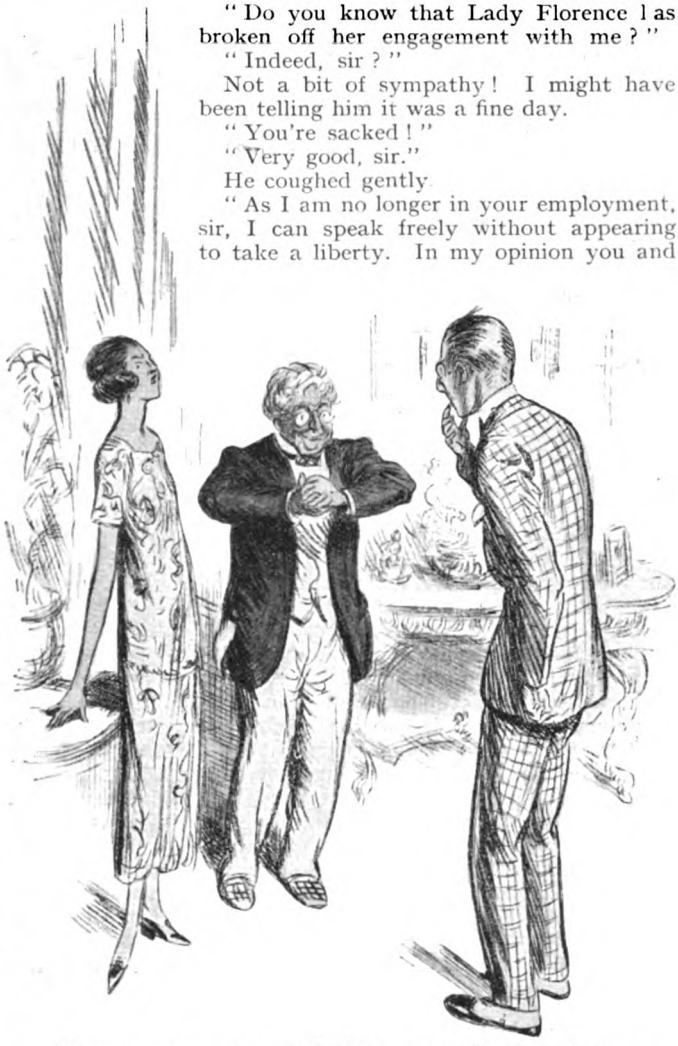
"Very good, sir."

He coughed gently.

"As I am no longer in your employment, sir, I can speak freely without appearing to take a liberty. In my opinion you and Lady Florence were quite unsuitably matched. Her ladyship is of a highly determined and arbitrary temperament, quite opposed to your own. I was in Lord Worplesdon's service for nearly a year, during which time I had ample opportunities of studying her ladyship. The opinion of the servants' hall was far from favourable to her. Her temper caused a good deal of adverse comment among us. It was at times quite impossible. You would not have been happy, sir!"

"Get out!"

"I think you would also have found her educational methods a little trying, sir. I have glanced at the book her ladyship gave you—it has been lying on your table



Florence gave me a look that went right through me like a knife.

since our arrival—and it is, in my opinion, quite unsuitable. You would not have enjoyed it. And I have it from her ladyship's own maid, who happened to overhear a conversation between her ladyship and one of the gentlemen staying here—Mr. Maxwell, who is employed in an editorial capacity by one of the reviews—that it was her intention to start you almost immediately upon Nietzsche. You would not enjoy Nietzsche, sir. He is fundamentally unsound."

"Get out!"

"Very good, sir."

IT'S rummy how sleeping on a thing often makes you feel quite different about it. It's happened to me over and over again. Somehow or other, when I woke next morning the old heart didn't feel half so broken as it had done. It was a perfectly topping day, and there was something about the way the sun came in at the window and the row the birds were kicking up in the ivy that made me half wonder whether Jeeves wasn't right. After all, though she had a wonderful profile, was it such a catch being engaged to Florence Craye as the casual observer might imagine? Wasn't there something in what Jeeves had said about her character? I began to realize that my ideal wife was something quite different, something a lot more clinging and drooping and prattling, and what not.

I had got as far as this in thinking the thing out when that "Types of Ethical Theory" caught my eye. I opened it, and I give you my honest word this was what hit me:—

"Of the two antithetic terms in the Greek philosophy one only was real and self-subsisting; and that one was Ideal Thought as opposed to that which it has to penetrate and mould. The other, corresponding to our Nature, was in itself phenomenal, unreal, without any permanent footing, having no predicates that held true for two moments together; in short, redeemed from negation only by indwelling realities appearing through."

Well—I mean to say—what? And Nietzsche, from all accounts, a lot worse than that!

"Jeeves," I said, when he came in with my morning tea, "I've been thinking it over. You're engaged again."

"Thank you, sir."

I sucked down a cheerful mouthful. A great respect for this Johnnie's judgment began to soak through me.

"Oh, Jeeves," I said; "about that check suit."

"Yes, sir?"

"Is it really a frost?"

"A trifle too bizarre, sir, in my opinion."

"But lots of fellows have asked me who my tailor is."

"Doubtless in order to avoid him, sir."

"He's supposed to be one of the best men in London."

"I am saying nothing against his moral character, sir."

I hesitated a bit. I had a feeling that I was passing into this chappie's clutches, and that if I gave in now I should become just like poor old Aubrey Fothergill, unable to call my soul my own. On the other hand, this was obviously a cove of rare intelligence, and it would be a comfort in a lot of ways to have him doing the thinking for me. I made up my mind.

"All right, Jeeves," I said. "You know! Give the bally thing away to somebody!"

He looked down at me like a father gazing tenderly at the wayward child.

"Yes, sir. Thank you, sir. I gave it to the under-gardener last night. A little more tea, sir?"

Next month we shall publish the first of

A NEW SERIES OF STORIES

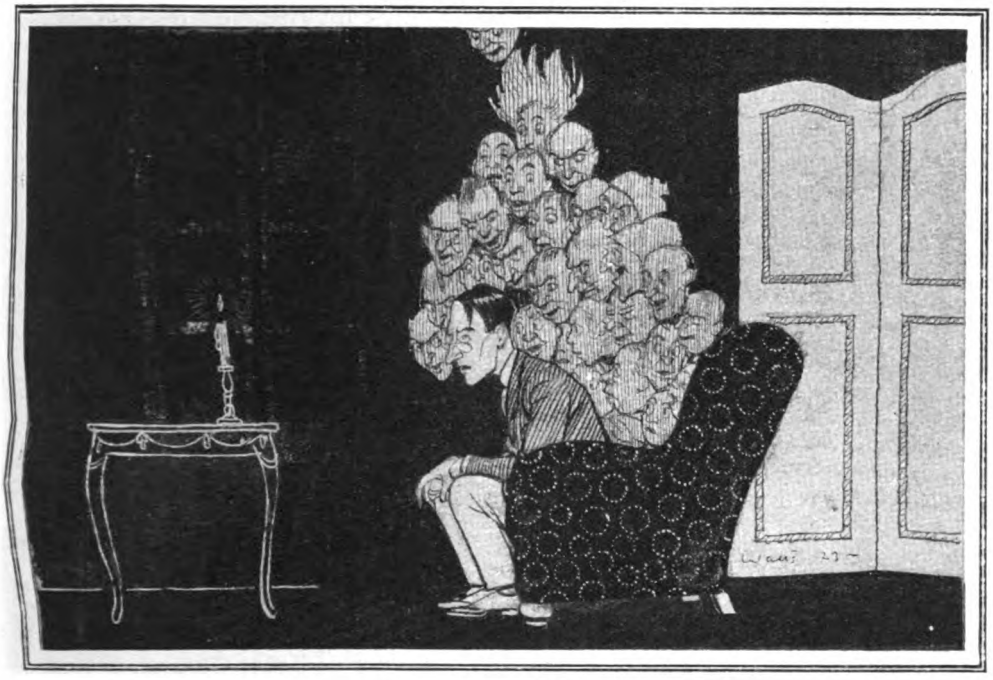
BY

P. G. WODEHOUSE,

in which the chief character, Stanley Featherstonhaugh Ukridge, is destined to rank in public favour with Archie and Jeeves. Need we say more?

THE TITLE OF THE OPENING STORY IS

"UKRIDGE'S DOG COLLEGE."



Haunting Dreams

A Symposium of Eminent Men

ILLUSTRATED BY ARTHUR WATTS

MR. JOHN ST. LOE STRACHEY, in his recently-published autobiography, "The Adventure of Living," says of his dreams: "I am worried by the sense of not being able to pack in time to catch my train, or else I am compelled to go back to Oxford and try to pass an examination under impossible and humiliating conditions." Recently, too, in a London morning paper, a clergyman confessed to dreaming frequently that he was standing in his pulpit before his congregation and just about to commence his sermon, but quite unable either to find or recall his text. He feverishly turned over the leaves of the Bible, whilst the eyes of the congregation were upturned to him in a cruel derision which filled his mind with dismay.

Readers of Robert Louis Stevenson will recall that he tells somewhere of an oft-recurring dream, in which he always found himself standing, as he says, "before the Great White Throne." In his dream his eternal destiny appeared to depend upon his successful recitation of a certain lesson he was supposed to have learned, but, like the "Alice" poems, either it came all wrong or entirely eluded his memory. He tells how he would awake weeping and in deep distress.

Now it must be confessed that dreams have always had a fascination for mankind since Joseph dreamed that the sun and moon and eleven stars bowed down to him, since Pharaoh dreamed of the fat and lean kine, since the "thoughts upon his bed and the visions in his head" troubled Nebuchadnezzar, and since John Bunyan feigned to "dream a dream" which has made his name immortal. But there are dreams and dreams. Some dreams are so trivial and

evanescent that they have furnished the greatest of hymn-writers with his greatest analogy—"fly, forgotten, as a dream dies at the opening day"; others are special and unique, whilst a whole class of dreams would seem to be the common experience of large numbers of people, and to recur again and again.

In order to test this question of Recurring or Haunting Dreams we have asked a number of representative men to give the readers of THE STRAND MAGAZINE the benefit of any experience in this line they may have, and the response has proved both valuable and entertaining, besides being a real contribution to the psychology of dreams.

SIR OLIVER LODGE,

the great scientist, writes: "My usual nightmare relates to travelling; especially the losing of trains. A particular dream-station has a number of platforms and staircases and passages along which the patient is hurrying and, wrongly directed, ultimately arrives on the first platform to see the train just going out. Sometimes the train is caught, but turns out to be the wrong one. There is a dream-station which I might recognize if it exists, but it is so unwieldy and confusing that the malice of man can hardly have erected it.

"Another recurrent dream used to trouble me at the beginning of Term, namely, that I had forgotten a lecture. Sometimes I found myself apparently listening to a distant noise which, it gradually dawned on me, was made by the students stamping in impatience; but in hurrying, in an obstructed manner, to the theatre, I found them just dispersed. This may have happened in real life, but it certainly happened in dreams: and waking was a relief. Travelling annoyances are with me, however, the most frequent kind of nightmare. Fortunately I seldom dream, for I do not remember any pleasant dreams."

G. B. BURGIN,

the famous novelist, seems to specialize in flying dreams. "From my earliest childhood my dreams have been about flying. Since then I have taken many novelistic flights, but not one of them has ever afforded me such varied incident. Whenever I was, or am, worried, or greatly pleased, this dream invariably recurs to me. I build a flying machine of my own invention, make wings fastened with something more durable than wax, and have surprising adventures in procuring the materials to fasten this machine to me. It always assumes the shape of a swallow-tailed butterfly, and I start gaily off, visiting all sorts of wondrous places, and I am always, or nearly always, invisible to the human eye.

"But once a blind man heard my whirring wings, stretched forth a gnarled and knotted hand, and crushed my throat in. Just as I was on the point of giving up the ghost I fell to the ground, felt a sharp pain, and woke to find a small brother dancing round me, and gleefully shouting: 'I've got him by the toe in my steel bird-trap!'

"But the sad part of these recurrent dreams is the beautiful things I see—things unpaintable by man, the holy mysteries night unfolds to my enraptured eyes; and then the slow flagging of tired wings, the gradual disintegration of my butterfly form, the confused waking to realities, and the vain attempt to recall in tangible shape all I have heard and seen. If I could only do so I might write a really great book. 'We are such stuff as dreams are made on,' and sometimes I am tempted to think all life is a dream!"

WILLIAM ARCHER,

the dramatic critic and playwright, says: "As I think the subject of dreams more important than is generally recognized, even in these days of psycho-analysis (which is often psycho-misanalysis), I willingly send you a note on my experience of recurring dreams.

"The term requires definition. Many people assure you that they have dreamt *the same dream* over and over again—three or even more times—usually adding that the dream proved to be a forecast or warning. I have no experience of this kind. Though I dream, to the best of my belief, every night, and perhaps all night, I have no recollection of a dream repeating itself in such detail as to enable me to say: 'I have had this very dream before.'

"On the other hand, there are certain *types of dreams* which constantly recur—such as the flying dream, and the dream of appearing in public in distressingly scanty attire. Such dreams, I take it, are familiar to everyone. I think I have had the examination dream, but not frequently. What is much more common with me is a dream governed, I imagine, by the same principle, but placed in a different setting.

"I dream that I am going to play a part on the stage. I am quite happy about it, and anticipate a great success—when suddenly, just as the curtain is rung up, I realize to my consternation that I have totally omitted to learn my lines. I may add that since my boyhood I have never acted, even as an amateur; nor have I ever felt the smallest ambition to go on the stage."

"From my earliest childhood," says Mr. G. B. Burgin, "my dreams have been about flying. I build a flying machine of my own invention, which always assumes the shape of a swallow-tailed butterfly."

It is evident that one cannot escape, even one's dreams, from one's environment, id in further corroboration of this comes

BERNARD SHAW,

ose dreams run much on the same lines as Mr. Archer's. The author of "Fanny's First Play" says: "My experience is practically the same as Strachey's, except that instead of his occasional examination ordeal I find myself madly about to walk on to the stage to perform a part of which

I do not know a word, or to sing an operatic *rôle* without knowing a note of it.

"This is clearly a variation of the examination dream. No examination could cause me the slightest anxiety, partly because the result would be a foregone conclusion (in the negative), and partly because I have no ambition in that direction. These dreams are overwork dreams. With me, as, I gather, with Mr. Strachey, they are nearly always connected with travelling, and are confined to railway and hotel difficulties. Motoring never comes into them."

The last sentence is a Shavian touch of true observation, and it would almost seem as if a certain novel phase of daily life must have had a pretty long run before it enters into the substance of our dreams. Thus none of our correspondents has any dream experience of an aeroplane or a motor-car, although the railway dream seems to have the widest distribution of any.

HAROLD BEGBIE

says: "My only persistent dream is one in which I labour under a sense of the immense importance of remembering it, convinced that I must report it in every detail to my family at the breakfast table: invariably waking with no knowledge whatever of the dream beyond this single pathetic fact that I wanted desperately to remember it.

"I am more interested in the dreams of one of my dogs than in my own. This very intelligent cross-bred Irish terrier sleeps in a basket in my room. Sometimes he merely dreams that he is chasing rabbits over the downs and heath of our favourite walk; but sometimes he appears to dream of matters which terrify him, uttering sounds I have never heard from any dog, and occasionally leaving his basket and coming to my bedside for comfort, as if imploring me to break my rule of never allowing him on the bed. These dreams greatly distress him, and I would give much if he could tell me what they mean."

PROFESSOR GEORGE SAINTSBURY,

the great literary critic, says: "I do not think that recurring dreams are at all uncommon. At any rate, I have been a dreamer all my life, and no small portion of my dreams have recurred with little or no variation. The most persistent has been one which, in this or that way, makes me pre-occupied, till I suddenly discover that the hour of some fixed engagement at newspaper office, lecture room, or what not, has passed. You will see how close this is to Mr. Strachey's. I could write a volume on Dreams."

M. EMILE CAMMAERTS,

the distinguished Belgian poet, writes half-humorously: "I used to have wonderful dreams and terrible nightmares as a boy, but if I ever dream nowadays, I cannot recall the story in the morning.

"When I began lecturing, I dreamt several times that I forgot my notes, and came before my audience unprepared, but as this occurred as a matter of fact once or twice in real life I am no longer worried by the incident in my sleep. There is, however, one feature of my former dreams which I remember very vividly. It is that the recurrence of the same nightmare provided me with the means of avoiding it. While dreaming, I was conscious that the events did not actually occur, and that I could, at any time, awake myself by shouting, which I did not fail to do whenever an agreeable dream took an ominous turn, and threatened to bring back the recurring menace. I believe this state of consciousness while dreaming is well known to psychologists, and, if I mention it, it is only because some people may not be aware that they can make such excellent use of it."

A. G. GARDINER,

a delightful essayist and formerly editor of the *Daily News*, says: "The only recurrent dream with which I am familiar is of a not uncommon nature—the catching or failure to catch trains. The scenes of the drama are two. In the one case it is a strange jumble of Tube and Metropolitan; in the other, it is a panic attempt to leave one train, at a place which is, I think, a nightmarish mixture of Crewe and Derby, in order to catch a waiting express for London.

"I race along the rails, reach the train just as it is moving, find every carriage packed, and so on. The only point of interest is that, in my family, I am a notorious joke on the subject of my anxiety about catching trains. The fact that that is the most constant theme of my dreams shows that the sleeping state finds its material in the preoccupations of the waking state."

W. W. JACOBS,

who is the last man to need any introduction to STRAND readers, is obsessed with the same dream which haunts Mr. Gardiner's sleeping hours. He says: "A very frequent dream of mine is of travelling by train. This is possibly because the present

railway fares make dream-travelling a luxury within the reach of all.

"No doubt a properly trained psychoanalyst, with a Freudian mind, would discover an interpretation so unpleasant that the rest of my life would be one big blush. Somehow, I never dream of taking tickets—in itself, I imagine, a sure sign of a depraved character. This may be the reason that, very often, the train does not wait for me."

A. B. COOPER,

the well-known author, seems to specialize in this sort of thing. "Recurring dreams?" he writes. "Mine seem almost all of that kind. One is my swimming dream. I never could swim beyond half-a-dozen strokes. Whilst other boys took to the water like spaniels, I 'lingered shivering on the brink and feared to launch away,' as Dr. Watts would say. Yet in my dreams not only can I swim, but swim like a cinema stunter with the accelerator turned on.

"Then there is my flying or levitation dream. I am never presented with wings. No 'plane—mono, bi, or tri—no balloon, no 'Zep' interposes its clumsy mechanism. I touch toe to earth and up I go. I never rise high. I just float clear of the ground and proceed in a series of air-leaps or finch-flights. When I first saw the children fly out-o'-window in 'Peter Pan' it was no surprise. I had done it scores of times.

"These two recurring dreams are pleasant, but most of them are the reverse—sometimes very distressing and wearying. Take, for instance, the cavern dream. I think this dream, and the one in which something awful is chasing you, must be a pre-natal survival of the time when our ancestors were cave-dwellers, liable to be chased home by a pterodactyl, and, in retreating to the inner fastnesses of their domicile, to get lost in its mazes, and perhaps buried in a natural sepulchre.

"However, in my cave dream I am always getting deeper and deeper into trouble, the dark passages ever narrower and narrower, till I feel I shall never squeeze through the aperture. I never seem to think of turning back. Besides, I have probably just struggled through the most awful slough, to which that of Despond was a mere puddle, and going forward is the lesser evil.

"I often argue in my dreams, and I think the course of such a dream argument presents a remarkable psychological puzzle. Although you are arguing with yourself, the same brain providing both 'pros' and 'cons,' yet you never anticipate your antagonist's pet points. They come as a surprise to you. You had, as it were, 'never thought of that.' Now which of these dream antagonists is *you* and which the *other fellow?*

"I must have dreamt scores of times that I have returned to the home of my boyhood. How familiar the little back gate by which I was wont to enter! I go confidently on, feeling glad to be home again, open the door, and all is changed! Strange faces look at me in surprise, if not in displeasure; the old familiar furniture is all gone. But the surprise at the change is always the same. Your former dream does nothing to prepare you for the shock.

"The dream town in which I get hopelessly lost may be on the world's map, but I have never been able to place it. I only know that it is a town which mainly consists of alley-ways which never lead to anywhere. I am going somewhere—I never know where. I never get there. I have never reached my destination in all my dream experience. I meet sinister-looking people. Sometimes I run and run in sheer panic. Then I dream that it is a dream, and wake to find, to my infinite comfort, that it is!"

ARTHUR CHRISTOPHER BENSON,

the delightful essayist, who looks out upon the world from the windows of Magdalene College, Cambridge, of which he is the Master, says: "I frequently have dreams of the kind you mention. In my case, they generally take the form of arriving at a station, depositing my luggage in a train standing at the platform, going to buy a paper, and then being unable to find the train again.

"Sometimes, but less frequently, I find myself giving an address, or reading a book aloud to an audience. But I turn the pages in vain. Some are blank, some in an unknown language, or containing entirely irrelevant matter."

SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE,

who, like "W. W.," needs no introduction to STRAND readers, says that he has never had a recurring dream. "But," he adds, "I have several times had prophetic dreams, exact in detail. In sleep the soul is freed and has enlarged knowledge. This it endeavours to pass on to the body, but it seldom succeeds. When it does, it is just at the moment between sleeping and waking."

E. TEMPLE THURSTON,

the brilliant author of "The City of Beautiful Nonsense," and many another highly-

imaginative novel, finds himself in his dreams even more imaginative than in his waking hours, for he is able to identify a city he has never seen !

" The dream which most often recurs to me," he says, " is that of finding myself in the streets of New York, quite alone, entirely friendless, without any possibility of returning to my own country. My sufferings on these occasions are not worth recording, but they are very acute. What relation this dream has to fact I cannot say, as I have never been in America."

COULSON KERNAHAN,

the well-known author of " Visions," " Dreams, Dead Earnest, Half-Jest," not to mention " More Than This World Dreams Of," might be expected to furnish a unique experience of recurrent dreams, and he is not disappointing.

" As a small boy," he says, " I collected butterflies, which, when captured and (I hope) killed, were transfixed by a pin through the thorax. A bull, upon whose domain I must have trespassed, apparently ' collected ' small boys, and, not having a pin about him, did his best to capture and to kill me by transfixing me with his horns.

" Not wishing to figure as a specimen in his collection, I bolted—to be brought up by the edge of a sheer-cut and deep gravel pit or quarry. Having to choose between the devil and the deep sea, between being ' gravelled ' and gored, I jumped. The bull followed suit—probably because he could not stop himself—and my next recollection is of seeing him lying beside me. I think he must have broken his neck, as his breath was ' oughing ' out, and his sides inflating and deflating (with gradually decreasing action) like a blacksmith's bellows. That a bull figures in my most recurring dream of the nightmare order seems to endorse the opinion that dreams are influenced by happenings in our early and most receptive years.

" A recurrent dream, not of the ' frightfulness ' type, concerns Dr. G. D. Deeping, father of Warwick Deeping, the novelist, with whom, during his lifetime, I was on terms of brotherly affection. Again and again I dream that we meet near the General Post Office, Hastings. Though quite aware, even in my dream, that he is dead, we meet, chat, and chaff each other, just as of yore. He does not explain, nor do I ask, how it happens he is there exactly as in life, but the two of us take up the thread of our long friendship where it was broken by his death.

" Thinking it likely, as I do, that death is no more than when, in a morning walk, one passes from one field into another, and that if a man were to drop dead suddenly, while walking, his real self would continue to walk on, possibly without realizing at first that anything unusual had occurred, I think it not impossible that this particular dream may prevision what in my own case may actually happen. When my ' number goes up,' the first whom I may encounter might well be my old friend. I shall say, ' Hallo, Deeping, dear old fellow ; I'm so glad to see you,' and he will say, ' Here you are then, K.' But lest all this should sound too much like nonsense to a matter-of-fact reader, I hasten to add that I am writing only of what occurs and recurs in dreams."

The dream-experience of so acute an intellect as that of

SIR WILLIAM ROBERTSON NICOLL,

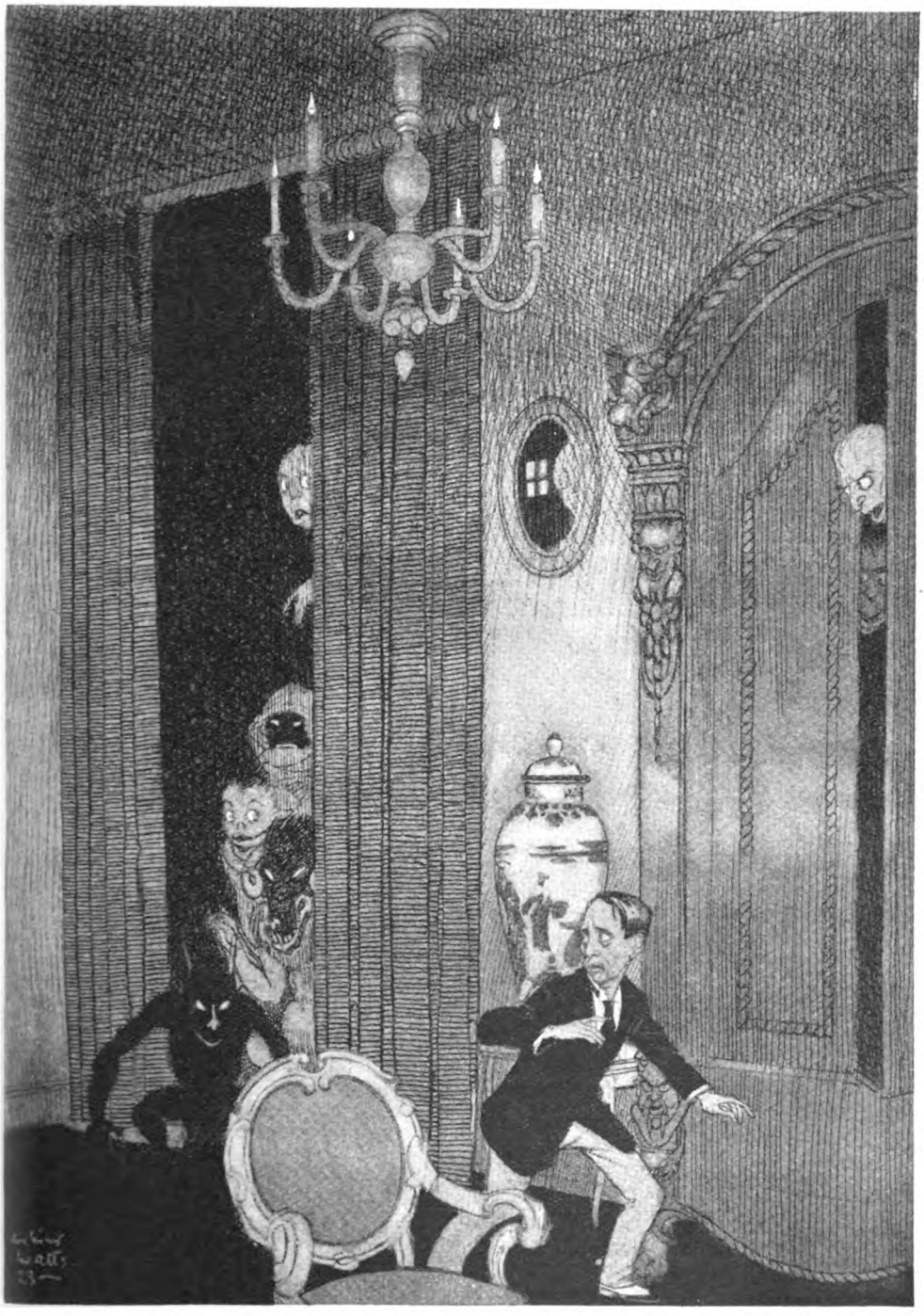
whose editorship of the *British Weekly* will always remain memorable, is of more than common interest. He says : " My recurrent dream for many years was based on an experience of preaching in Dr. Whyte's church, Free St. George's, Edinburgh. On one occasion Dr. Whyte kindly exchanged pulpits with me. At that time the services were morning and afternoon. I preached in the morning, and returned to Dr. Whyte's house a little distance away.

" I reckoned that the afternoon service would be at 2.30, and was preparing accordingly. But about 2.15 a servant came in and asked whether I had not made a mistake. It turned out then that the service was at 2.15, and there was nothing for it but to hasten. I literally ran all the way between Melville Street and the church, and got into the pulpit about 2.20. This turned out to be a great shock to me. For many years I constantly dreamed of it, although fortunately no harm was done."

DR. DAVID GOW,

the able editor of *Light*, who is a well-known authority on dreams and dreaming, writes interestingly : " I have long subjected my dream experiences to close scrutiny and analysis, more especially as it happens occasionally that I am conscious of being asleep while dreaming, and so can view the dream from the standpoint of a spectator.

" Of recurring dreams I have several, and for the present purpose will select two of the most persistent. I am given a stark, unlovely patch of ground to cultivate, the soil thin, harsh, shallow, the locality sunless, enclosed by great walls. But I go to work hopefully, using all my ingenuity to raise flowers, or even the humbler plants. Though it is labour in vain, yet, ever as the dream recurs, I resume work with praiseworthy perseverance. Perhaps I shall make a



"Bogies, spectres, weird shapes peer from cupboards and curtained recesses. I begin," says Dr. David Gow, "by defying the ghosts and trying to hunt them out, but in the end they always hunt me."

garden at last. Time is not 'of the essence of the contract' in dreams, and I have been at it a long time now.

"In another dream I am in a house. It is my own, but in my dream I always make the discovery that it is much larger than I had supposed. It comes upon me as a surprise that I should have lived in the house so long without discovering that it contained suites of rooms of whose existence I was quite ignorant. I find in these newly-discovered rooms much strange furniture, always a pleasing discovery.

"But there are apartments into which I cannot go, because they are 'haunted.' Bogies, spectres, weird shapes peer from cupboards and curtained recesses, and occasionally come out to menace the intrepid explorer. I begin by defying the ghosts and trying to hunt them out, but in the end they always hunt *me*, and force me to take refuge in the rooms with which I am familiar in my waking hours.

"This dream has recurred at intervals for years, and I hope it will continue to do so, because, although the scene is always the same, there is an agreeable variety in each presentation of the dream-drama. The puzzle is why some of the situations surprise me, who am presumably the 'sole and onlie begetter' of the comedy, and also why I am so frequently the under-dog when, as actor-manager of my own dream, I might expect to be the hero of the piece."

A. ST. JOHN ADCOCK,

the able editor of the *Bookman*, and himself a novelist and poet of distinction, says: "I had a dream a good many years ago, in which the second and third began where the first and second left off. I have entirely forgotten all details of it, and it can scarcely be called 'recurring.' I have had another that has come three or four times at longish intervals in the last ten years or so. Each time I have met, in a room my waking eyes have never seen, four friends.

"The odd thing is that two are dead and two living, and the last two never met the first two in life, nor, so far as I know, ever heard of them. In the dream, I am aware that two of the party are dead, but there seems nothing remarkable in the fact of their being there. Nothing happens. We merely sit and talk, and, though on waking I can remember the room and the people, I cannot recall anything we said to each other. An inconsequent affair that even a psycho-analyst would hardly furnish with any significance."

GEORGE RUSSELL,

poet, Irish patriot, distinguished artist, and able publicist, whose diphthong signature "Æ" is known everywhere, writes: "I never had a dream which recurred in the same form. But many years ago, at intervals of many months, I had dreams which were all concerned with my journeys to a certain place, or my return from that place. I could always remember starting out on the journey, or my return, but never anything about the place itself or what happened there. I always went with delight and expectation, and always returned in a frenzy of haste, as if everything in life depended on my swift return.

"I always connected these dreams with each other, but the circumstance of voyage there and back differed, and all I know of the place was that it was in a great city, and the purpose of my visit was a council on important matters. I cannot say whether my haste in return was to escape the nocturnal police or whether it was because, if I were delayed, I had not wherewithal to support myself in the dream city, and would be an outcast there. That is the nearest experience of a recurrent dream I can remember."

H. DE VERE STACPOOLE,

whose fine novel, "The Garden of God," is at present one of the main features of this magazine, is still another victim of the railway dream.

"Either an engine is trying to ride me down," he says, "or I am running to catch a train which I always miss. The other night I was trying to reach Marseilles by the Underground (Inner Circle) train. I have generally discovered that I have lost my ticket on these excursions—that is if I manage to catch a train; either that, or I have all my dogs with me, and have forgotten to buy them tickets.

"The other dream is flying, or, at least, floating. I am so light that a touch of my finger on the floor will raise me like a penny balloon. This is a delightful dream till one wakes up to find oneself fourteen stone again!"

The Onward Years

by

ROLAND PERTWEE

ILLUSTRATED BY C.E.BROCK, R.I

THE photograph album was of morocco leather, and across one corner was inscribed the word "Album," that it might be distinguished from the family Bible with which it shared company. The pages were imprisoned by a clasp of water-gilt which snapped as crisply after seventy years' service as on the day it was supplied. Originally, the leather was of deep maroon and the lettering of gold, but with the gentle deposits of time the colour had faded and the gold was spent.

Gracefully illuminated was the fly-leaf, which set forth, in a vignette of moss-roses and forget-me-nots, the flowing statement: "This album is the property of——" But no one had filled in the space for the owner's name. Courage and pretty craftsmanship is needed to pen Albert Edward Freemantle in the heart of a bouquet without detracting from its charm.

Mr. Freemantle took the album tenderly and released the clasp. He paused as his eyes settled on the floral fly-leaf, smiling

and nodding as to an old friend before passing it by and coming to the first page. His mother and father. What a long time ago those photographs were taken! How serene, how prim his mother looked, with her smooth, parted hair, the rolled plaits over her ears, and her little tight-corseted body with the crinoline that billowed from her waist in a score of pipe-edged flounces. He wondered what book it was that lay in her lap, cradled in the mittened hands. All his life he had wondered about that book. He would die wondering. How stern and implacable was his father—a very man, with his side whiskers, his stock, the short cut-away coat, the splendid vest, and the clinging trousers strapped beneath the boots.

". . . the front of Jove himself;
An eye like Mars, to threaten and command."

It was a pity he should have worn that trivial and almost brimless bowler hat. It was a comic hat. Mr. Freemantle could remember having laughed at it when he was still a child. The laugh had angered his father and a penalty associated with the back of a hair-brush had been exacted. There was discipline in those days. As memory of the little incident revived Mr. Freemantle chuckled, and at the chuckle his wife woke up with a start, and said:—

"What is it?"

"I was looking through the old book," he answered. "It brings things back—old things."

She put on her glasses and came and sat beside him. He turned another page, and she pointed with a thin, almost transparent finger.

"You," she said.

How serene, how prim his mother looked!

SUCH a scrubby youth he was, all hands and feet, and untidy hair. About his neck was a crimson woollen comforter with the ends passed under his arms and knotted behind his back. It would have been impossible to say whether he wore knickerbockers or trousers, for they were too long for the one and too short for the other. With a large flint he was engaged in hacking out bricks from the wall of a pigsty. His hands were red and chapped, for it was winter and there were little pillows of snow here and there in the farmyard and thin white mattresses on the roofs of the buildings.

"Four we want," said Edward. "Four. I'll knock 'em out and you chip off the mortar."

His companion, a boy of fifteen, nodded rather vaguely. To revive his interest, Edward, who was a year older, dropped a brick on his toe.

"Teach you," he remarked, "to listen when I'm talking."

Ernie, for so he was named, endured this disciplinary measure with fortitude and even apologized for lack of attention.

"Don't know what's come to me," he added.

"Nor do I," said Edward, sternly; "but you look a fool. You've been on at me for months to show you how to make a brick trap, and now I'm doing it you don't even look."

Ernie nodded.

"I feel a fool," he admitted, "and expect I look one, Ed."

"You do," was the candid retort. "Here, get on with that chipping."

Without enthusiasm, Ernie picked up the brick and a garden trowel and fell to work.

"Snowy weather is best for brick traps," stated Edward, with authority. "We're almost certain to get a blackie or a thrush if we set it right. I didn't tell you before, but old Dodge's magpie died yesterday, and he gave me *that wicker cage.*"

Before turning to mark its effect, he allowed a full moment for the tremendous significance of this announcement to soak

in. To his amazement, he found that Ernie was staring at a patch of snow, into which he was mechanically dipping a forefinger. His expression was dreamy and remote.

There was only one thing to be done, and Edward did it. He seized Ernie by the nape of the neck and forced his face into the snow, holding it there for the required period, as set forth in the book of punishments.

"Now," he demanded, releasing the culprit, "are you better?"

"No," confessed Ernie, "and I'm not likely to be—ever."

For a moment Edward scrutinized the face of his friend, and illumination came.

"You?" he gasped.

Ernie nodded ashamedly.

"In love?"

Again the nod.

Edward threw up his head.

"Faugh!" he said, "Faugh! I did think better of you, Ernie."

"It wasn't my fault," came the sad rejoinder. "She looked at me."

"Looked at you! As if——"

"Oh, but it does," said Ernie, "it does. You can't stand up against it. It's—you don't think I wanted it to happen to me?"

"Girls," Edward announced, "are rubbish—are mud."

Ernie agreed.

"But it's difficult to tell 'em so," he said.

"Difficult! Rot!"

"I'm not like you, you see."

Edward thought for a moment.

"Look here," he asked, "do you want to go about with your head on one side looking like a silly calf—or do you not?"

"Of course I don't."

"Do you want to behave like a milksop loony tied up to a fool girl, or do you want to be able to go on taking an interest in decent things like you used to?"

"Of course I do."

"Then you want to get out of it?"

"Yes."

"Right, I'll get you out. I'll go and see her."

Ernie's expression brightened. "Oh, would you?"

"I'll see her now."

Ernie's expression clouded.

"But suppose, even after that, she looks at me again?"

Edward scoffed.

"I'll soon settle her," he said, "and her looks."

"Ed, you are something like a chum."

How stern and implacable was his father!

Edward tightened the comforter about his neck, and gave his trouserbockers a hitch.

"Don't worry," he said. "Get on chipping those bricks. I'll manage all right."

There was no need to ask who she was. Her name was Jessica Ruby Melford and she lived in the house with the yew hedge, through which she would peer as people passed by. She was peering when Edward hove in sight—on the look-out, perhaps, for her victim Ernie. In Edward's right hand was a well-compacted snowball. He approached, humming an air, as befitted a mettlesome fellow. He stopped abruptly opposite the gap in the hedge, said "Don't stare, you," and slung the snowball with faithful aim and true.

But Jessica was familiar with the eccentricities of youth and was ready with reprisals. She leapt into the air, seized a branch of a laburnum tree, and gave it a vigorous shake. A positive avalanche of snow fell upon the luckless head of Edward. Here was an affront that might not be overlooked. With a war cry, peculiar to a certain band of which he was the leader, Edward went through the yew hedge head first. Followed a flight and a pursuit among

the rhododendrons of remarkable energy and discrimination. The feature of the affair was a pair of mid-Victorian knickers, with embroidered frills, which hung below the knees of a pair of brown legs which were never in the same place for two consecutive instants.

It will not be known whether Jessica was caught or only allowed herself to be caught. The chase ended with Edward's hands gripping her wrists and Jessica's heels kicking his shins. This solution proving painful and unsatisfactory, Edward shifted his grip to her ankles and brought her down with a bump in a patch of very squelchy moss.

"Sit there," he ordered, "and listen to me."

"May I sit somewhere else," she pleaded, "'cos it's all soaking through?"

Edward deemed the request a reasonable one and transferred her, under guard, to a stone bench.

"Look here," he began.

But she did not wait for him to finish Girls don't, sometimes.

"What have I done that you should be unkind to me?" she asked.

"You've turned my chum into a silly ass."

"Who is your chum?"

Edward told her.

"Pooh," said Jessica, "he was a silly always."

Edward should have been annoyed about that, but he was not. However, he stuck to his point.

"You looked at him," he said, "and made him one.'

"By looking?"

"Yes."

"Well, that's silly if you like," said Jessica. "That's most silly. As if anyone could—by looking."

Edward turned to her with a severe frown. He observed that she had an oval face, hair that wasn't bad, a nose that was all right, blue eyes—very blue eyes—a mouth—well, yes, it was rather a nice mouth and—a look.

He cleared his throat.

"Understand," he said, huskily, "you've got to let young Ernie alone."

"If *you* say I must," said the look—the disturbing look.

Edward rose.

"Well, don't forget it," he admonished her. "I'm going back now to show him how to make a brick trap."

"I wish you'd show me," said Jessica.

"Girls don't understand traps," he snorted, "and, anyway, you haven't any bricks."

Jessica sniffed.

"It happens there are some," she retorted, "some new ones. But don't bother."

He hesitated and glanced at her. The look had shifted its direction, but it was still there.

"I will if you like," he mumbled.

Ernie sat on the wall for a long time after he had chipped the mortar off the last brick. Evening had set in before his chum appeared. There was a leaf in Edward's buttonhole and he walked slowly.

"I say, they're all ready," shouted Ernie. "I did 'em ages ago."

"Oh!" said Edward, dreamily. "I'm sick of all that kiddish stuff."

The thaw had set in.

With a large flint he was engaged in hacking out bricks from the wall of a pigsty.

AND then that bridal group with bride and bridegroom respectively seated and standing, and the little strip of Turkey carpet to protect white satin shoes

It will not be known whether Jessica was caught or only allowed herself to be caught

from a humid lawn. How gallantly—how protectively—how possessively his hand rests on her brocaded shoulder, discreetly interposed between the veil of *point de Venise* and the puffed leg-of-mutton sleeve! And how sweetly her eyes shine with the soft white light of surrender and the bright white light of roguishness! It is the old perplexing look again. Like a twelve-inch gun her bouquet with its paper frill is trained upon the camera. Mark how the groom bears upon his left arm a tall silk hat—as though it were a casque in days of chivalry. Observe the classic lines of her flowing train—Ruskin would have joyed in them. And the half distance with its fresco of bridesmaids and relations! Not a fresco—a domino, rather, of black frock-coats and white muslins—the weaker and the stronger sex in equal parts. And there, standing a little aloof, Ernie. Ernie with a sweeping moustache, a white satin tie, and folded arms. Ernie as best man and looking it. Do you seek for sadness in the expression of Ernie—you shall not find it. Instead, you shall observe how his eyes repose upon the second bridesmaid from the left—the one with the dimple in her chin. He was caught in the act of glancing by the stern "Quite still, please," from the photographic artist. There was no escape. What may have been a mere passing fancy is captured as an exhibit for the ages. Perhaps that was why he married her—although it may have been for more personal reasons. You shall find presently the portrait of their eldest with his father's moustache and his mother's dimple on another page.

Like sentinels on either side of this group stand a tiny girl and boy. Bo-Peep one would say of her, with that shovel bonnet and the ribboned crook. He, the boy, has evidently hastened to the bridal from duties at the Court. The cut steel buttons on the velvet jacket—the black satin knee-breeches and the buckled shoes—must surely have origin in affairs of royalty.

Mrs. Freemantle rippled with laughter.

"He was sick," she said. "Do you remember—in the passage? It was the marzipan."

He remembered and laughed too.

"What a day it was, Jess! And afterwards!"

"Rice always reminds me," she said "Our trying to pretend we weren't on a honeymoon and the way it pattered out of

The bridal group, with bride and bridegroom respectively seated and standing, and the little strip of Turkey carpet to protect white satin shoes from a humid lawn.

your clothes and my hair when I did it that night."

"I did it," he corrected her.

"You brushed it, Edward."

"Yes, you're right. I brushed it."

"Such a pretty room we had, but there were lumps in the bed."

"I don't remember that," said he.

FOUR pieces of stamp paper holding in place a photograph of the *Times* Birth Column in miniature.

"*Jessica, wife of Albert Edward Freemantle, of a daughter.*"

And opposing it a memorial card and a picture of a tiny headstone with illegible lettering.

"I saw in the paper only yesterday," said Edward Freemantle, "that there is another outbreak of scarlet fever in several districts."

Jessica nodded. That cloud—that tragedy which had shaken the walls of their small kingdom—was too remote for tears. Tears belong to happy, not to sad memories.

She turned another page and shook her head at the portrait of a comfortable-looking man who wore the apron and jewellery of a Mason. There was something glassy in his eye. He looked well-fed and a shade too self-important.

"I never can think of that as being you," said Jessica with a small sniff, "all dressed up so!"

He frowned and said:—

"It's a marvellous institution."

"For men. Women don't think so."

"They know nothing about it, my dear."

"Then you can't wonder they don't like it," said she.

It was an old argument. Mr. Freemantle cherished the one secret of his life unshared by his wife.

She tossed her small white head.

"Those evenings I had to spend alone."

"But the knowledge one was doing good to people ought——"

"What good?" she asked for the millionth time.

"You know I cannot tell you that, my dear."

The same provoking answer.

"As if I couldn't make you tell if I wanted to!" she said, with that old smile of hers.

Another page opened and flicked past. Mr. Freemantle put up a hand.

"Take them as they come," he said. "Turn it back. Good or bad, it was part of the way we travelled."

An officer in the uniform of a Lancer regiment, tall, good-looking, with an air.

"I often wonder you left it with the rest, Edward."

"I was fond of him."

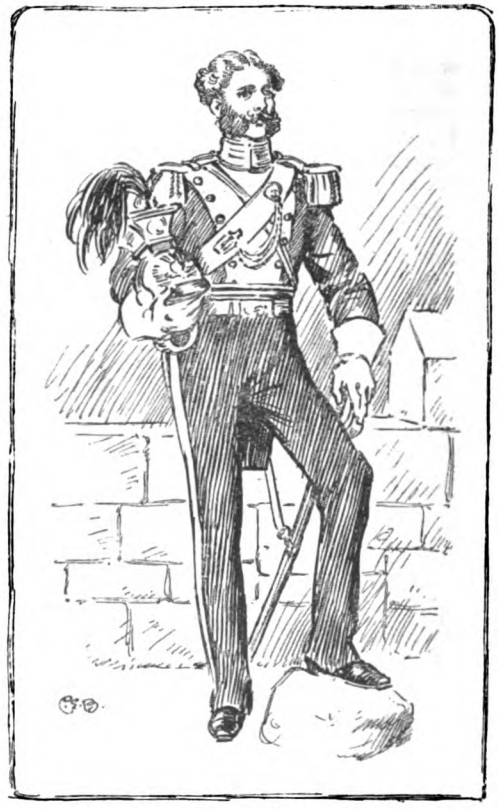
"I suppose I ought to have torn it up. I meant to."

"It would have been a pity," he said. "We owe him some thanks, Jess."

She put her hand into his.

"You're a good man. I like you."

"He stirred up the broth of our life," said Edward Freemantle.



An officer in the uniform of a Lancer regiment, tall, good-looking, with an air.

ROUTINE, routine—punctual meals—regular habits—a train faithfully caught at the same moment each day—an extra inch on the waistcoat year by year. Time running away from youth and youth a neglected figure on a hill. Turn the pages quickly and, in the changing of the faces before you, mark the curves of time and the footprints of the onward years. See

how the addition goes. Simple, callow, merry, alert, ardent, electric, amiable, substantial, important, inflated, and then that unvarying, stolid, complacent look that never changes as the hair that frames its wearer's face thins and whitens. Reconstruct what follows from the likeness upon the page. It is easy enough, if you see clearly and read the inevitables. Three portraits will suffice to tell this simple tale—three, with perhaps a fourth to supply the local colour.

The fourth is a hospital nurse with a tight alpaca coat and a small hat that looks like half a pie tied with broad ribbons beneath her chin. She is standing by the iron gate of a house with a portico. Edward's house.

A hospital nurse with a tight alpaca coat and a small hat that looks like half a pie.

And the latest of Edward—solemn—sombre—correct. He wears one glove and carries the other. He has no book, for he is occupied with himself—he is self-complete—he has acquired the bravery of self-confidence and no longer fears the eye of the camera. He knows that in the photograph, as in life, he will come out well.

Captain Carlton Meakin, of the Lancers, we know already, and have admired the dash—the air—the something gallant in his bearing.

And Jessica? It would seem less a portrait of Jessica than of a riddle. She is still young, even though the bonnet of the period takes from her youth. Yet it would seem absurd that a bonnet could ring so great a change. Plainly something is missing—something vital, personal. The look! That's the solution. The look has vanished—replaced by faint showings of disappointment—of perplexity—and a hint of loneliness.

IN Edward reposed the comfortable assurance that all that could be done had been done. Everywhere his thoroughness had been exhibited. To the suggestion that the operation should be performed at a nursing home he returned a firm refusal. He himself removed the pictures from the spare room, and had broken the glass of the Castle of Chillon while so doing. He himself supervised the taking down of the curtains and the papering, on the outside, of the lower panes of the windows. He had seen to it, when the carpet was taken up, that the charwoman scrubbed the boards as she had never scrubbed before. With his own hands he lighted the fumigating cartridges, and with his own hands sprayed the walls with disinfectant so thoroughly that the roses in the little baskets wept pink tears all over the blue trellis.

After that he had a sensible chop, having so placed himself at the table that he could observe the labours of the men who were laying straw outside the house. During the afternoon he took a wise walk, and those few friends he chanced to encounter were filled with admiration at his demeanour.

The specialist—the only one who could be entrusted to perform so delicate an operation with any hope of success—would not arrive from Edinburgh, whence he had been summoned by telegram, until five p.m. By five-fifteen—in accordance with Edward's instruction, vessels containing boiling water and the spirit-lamps were to be placed in the spare room, and then Jessica would be brought to it, and then, so far as his—Edward's—work was concerned, nothing remained to be done.

It was astonishing how coolly and with what discrimination he had acted. He could not avoid a feeling of self-satisfaction. Never for an instant had he allowed emotion, sentiment, or nervousness to mar his efficiency. He had even complained about

the want of crispness in his breakfast bacon, as was his usual custom. He had saved up the *Times* to read while the operation was being performed. No man could have displayed more excellent forethought.

But at a quarter to five he began to feel rather funny. He was not sure whether it was anything to do with being hungry, for the sensation attacked him low down with a feeling of emptiness. As a remedial measure he ate three Osborne biscuits from the canister of polished walnut-wood. There was not enough moisture in his mouth to wet them down, so he poured out a little water from the frosted glass jug and drank it. Somehow he still felt funny.

It was then ten minutes to five. He had not intended to do so, but he mounted the stairs to Jessica's room to assure her all was in order.

Jessica looked at him gravely when he came in, but said nothing. The nurse was knitting. Edward had some difficulty in finding anything to say, so he cleared his throat, interested himself in the pictures, and ran a third finger along the mantelpiece for dust.

Jessica said :—

"Your collar is sticking up at the back."

"Really?" said Edward, and put the matter right.

Then some more silence.

Then :—

"Will he be here soon?"

"At five. Yes. Everything's ready."

"Oh!"

"I think you'll find it all quite comfortable."

"Yes."

Another silence—presently :—

"Do you remember that snowball?" Jessica asked.

"Snowball?"

"The one you threw at me."

"*I* threw at you?"

"Yes. Edward, is it snowing now?"

"No, my dear."

"I wish it would—then perhaps you could get some and throw one at me now."

Edward glanced at the nurse and shook his head.

"I wouldn't worry over these things, Jessica," he said; then, as an afterthought: "When you're well again we must choose a new wall-paper for the spare room. The disinfectant has made the colour run."

"Yes," said Jessica, "people throwing snowballs."

Edward kissed her forehead and went out of the room.

And presently the operation began.

It would take three hours, the surgeon said. Three hours! After an age Edward looked at the clock. He could not believe that only three minutes had passed since the closing of the door upstairs. There must be something wrong with the clock, he thought; but when he listened it was still tick-tacking to its accustomed measure. He returned to the leather armchair and opened the *Times*. There was a leading article on agricultural conditions. He had to focus his attention upon it. Here was the result.

"If we compare the harvests of—— If we compare the harvests of—— If we compare the harvests of——"

The line went round and round. He could not get past it to the next.

In the room overhead footsteps went to and fro.

"If we compare the harvests of——"

SOMEONE was mounting the front steps. Edward went out into the hall in time to open the door before the knocker sounded.

On the threshold stood Captain Carlton Meakin. Edward blinked at him.

"Of course!" he said. "You were not aware. My wife, unhappily——"

"I've just heard," said Meakin. "Heard accidentally. My God, Freemantle, why wasn't I told?"

Edward stared at Meakin in astonishment as, uninvited, he strode into the hall and pitched hat and gloves on a console table.

"The operation has begun," he whispered. "At a time like this visitors——"

"Visitors!" snorted Meakin, and marched into the dining-room with Edward following.

"Now tell me everything, what the surgeon said, her chance? The seriousness of it?"

"It is very serious," Edward announced, gravely, for Meakin's excitement had sobered and perplexed him. "In the circumstances, I should be glad if——"

"No, no. I must stay. Can't be got rid of like that."

"Meakin!"

"Sorry. I hardly know what I'm saying. The shock of it—and—— How long before we get news?"

"We!"

"You, then—what's a word matter?"

"They will take three hours."

"Three! And is he up to it—a first-rate man—this surgeon—is he any good?"

"He is the finest surgeon in England to-day," Edward replied, with much injury. "And may I say I regard that question as——"

"Oh, yes," said Meakin, moving his head from side to side. Without invitation he poured himself out a glass of water and drank it at a gulp. That done, he fixed Edward with a pair of very pale blue eyes.

"What were you doing before I came in?" he demanded.

"May I point out——"

"What you were doing, man?"

He spoke in the voice of one accustomed to command. Edward drew himself up, and replied:—

"Since you ask, I was reading the *Times*."

Meakin jerked up his head with an exclamation of disgust.

"Were you so?" he said. "Were you so?"

"How dare you!" cried Edward, suddenly blazing up. "By what possible right do you criticize—d'you imagine I have not suffered enough to-day without putting up with impertinent interrogations from——"

Meakin nodded.

"You're right," he said. "I'm behaving like a cad—outsider. I beg your pardon. I'm sorry, only——" The sentence was left unfinished.

"In an ordeal of this kind—when a man has done everything in the world to neglect no single precaution—it's intolerable to——"

"I know. I beg your pardon."

"I can't understand——"

"It was unforgivable."

"Coming here and——"

"I've no excuse."

"It's—er——"

From above came the sound of a voice imperatively demanding something, the name of which failed to penetrate through floor and ceiling. Edward stopped talking and winced nervously, half turned towards the door, and with an effort halted. Meakin put out a hand and took him gently by the arm.

"Is that?"

Edward nodded.

"Just above."

Meakin licked his dry lips.

"Isn't there another room?" he queried. "This—this is awful—being able to hear."

Edward took no notice. His face was set—listening.

"Old man—Freemantle—I say!"

"Well?"

"Let's go out for a bit, shall we? Walk a bit. No good here! 'Tisn't six yet—the florists won't be shut. Let's buy some flowers—heaps of 'em—jolly coloured ones."

"You go," said Edward, slowly. "I shall stay here."

"As you wish. We'll stay, then. I only thought when she came to—was better—

"In the circumstances, I should be glad if——"
"No, no. I must stay. Can't be got rid of like that."

and finding flowers in the room—little things like that mean a lot to a woman."

Edward turned and looked at him thoughtfully.

"I suppose you are right," he said.

Again came the sound of the voice barking instructions.

At the sound Meakin's composure broke into atoms like a smashed tumbler.

"My God," he cried, "I can't stand it—can't, can't! The fool's bungled, I'll swear! Jessica—Jess!"

And then Edward's voice—ringing clear as a bell.

"Sit down."

"But, man alive——"

"Sit down."

He found himself forced into a chair. His breath was coming in short gasps like a man at the end of a race.

There was a long silence. Then——

"Meakin," said Edward, "how far has this gone?"

"What do you mean?"

"Let's be honest with each other. How far?"

Meakin's head went down into his hands.

"I've never said a word."

"Does she know?"

"Women guess."

The next sentence came with difficulty.

"Did she—was she kind?"

"**She** was lonely, I think—felt neglected—something was missing."

"Neglected! But I—— Well—go on."

"There's no more, old man."

Edward moved to the window and looked out. Snow had begun to fall. The pavements showed pale by the light of the gas lamps and the leaves of the privet hedge were wearing liveries of white.

"What was missing?" he asked presently. Then, as there was no answer: "Something in me?"

"You had your interests—perhaps they weren't always hers. There was a gap—gaps in her happiness somewhere."

"Was there a look in her eyes when she guessed?"

Meakin started.

"How did you know?"

"There was, then?"

Meakin nodded.

"It was that that made me——"

"I know," said Edward. "It does. That look was for you?"

"She was staring out of the window when I saw it. When she turned to me again it was gone. She seemed to be thinking of something. No, it was not for me. What's the good of all this, anyway?"

Edward looked at the clock.

"Two more hours," he said.

Meakin shivered.

"Meakin," said Edward, "as you believe in God, answer me this question."

"Yes."

"If all goes well—when she comes to—is conscious again—who would she rather find by her side—you or me?"

"Have you so little faith in her as to ask that?"

"In myself—not her," he replied. "I think I've rather lost myself as she knew me behind a rubbish pile of convention—prosperity and a few grey hairs. Answer my question, if you please."

"You as she knew you before you lost yourself," came the answer.

A thin sigh escaped between Edward's shut teeth. There were beads of sweat on his forehead. He said:—

"Thank you." Then, after a long time: "I wonder if I could find myself for her—I wonder?"

Neither Carlton Meakin nor any other man could have understood his next remark. It leapt out like a Jack-in-the-box as though a closed door had suddenly opened.

"I remember that snowball," he exclaimed.

Afterward he looked ever so much younger. And seeing the youth steal back into his eyes, Carlton Meakin seemed to age visibly.

MRS. FREEMANTLE nodded her white head over the page.

"He was a dear fellow," she said. "Like a great baby he was. I almost cried when you told me he had gone abroad."

Edward Freemantle chuckled.

"The young scamp! That was a bitter night, Jessica. After leaving the house he stood over there, hidden under that lilac, and watched the light in your window, hour after hour. I took him a cup of tea and as dawn broke I told him the danger was past. Almost frozen he was. I had to shake him before he could understand. Then suddenly he began to laugh. I laughed too, and we punched each other and shook hands. It was always a mystery to me how the snowballing began. Sometimes I think the policeman started it—or the relief, perhaps. So long ago one forgets. What a fight it was! Poor old Meakin!"

"I never liked that woman he married," said Jessica. "Those big hats she wore!"

"Oh, come! She bore him fine sons. Though it was a pity the eldest got mixed up in that divorce case."

"Perhaps he wasn't entirely to blame," said Jessica.

Edward Freemantle opened his mouth, and on a second thought closed it again.

"Perhaps not," he said. "But our son——"

HULLO! Edward Freemantle, Junior! Yours is a tardy appearance, but you are none the less sturdy on that account. The art of the camera has improved with the march of time. Those matt surface "studios" of you naked and asprawl on a Polar-bear skin are reason enough for pride in the faces of your parents. Come, sir, you over-fill these middle pages as the true circles of your babyhood oval and sharpen and re-shape into the angularities of youth. You move too quickly, Edward Freemantle, Junior. We cannot believe those little naked limbs could grow so fast or pass so rapidly from one raiment to another. Oh youth, youth! You are ripping across the pages of middle age like a juggernaut. Stand aside a moment and let us see what is happening to the folks we used to know. Give room, sir, be kind, be fair. The world belongs to young and old alike. Give us space to count the dry leaves beneath the green. Draw rein, Edward. There can be but one end to the headlong gallop through the years; will you forestall it by your haste? Hands snatch at the bridle, voices call as, astride the splendid twenties, you thunder by. Aha! tripped, Edward Freemantle, Junior! It was bound to happen. Held and captived by a look. Small blame to you, for Phyllis has eyes that hold.

And then—the old people ambling up for the bridal. Bouquet and buttonhole—white waistcoat and flounce—wrinkled,

twinkling, and breathless. They are no longer front benchers—to them belongs the mid-distance. Theirs is the partial obscurity of the publisher whose mind is full of plans for a new edition of an old work.

Some more pages and we are nearing the last. Old threads may be picked up here and old friends followed out. That white cross marks a bit of England in a valley below Passchendaele. Ernie—you remember Ernie ?—his boy lies under that cross, with his father's moustache and his mother's dimple. That spaniel had soft eyes and affectionate habits and died of being run over. Those twins belong to Mary, who was such a good parlourmaid and married a postman who got a D.C.M. during the war and was clever at chip-carving.

"Do you know," said Jessica, seriously, "I don't like this portrait of our Edward ? He looks so smug in it. A young man like that."

"Forty," said her husband. "Forty, my dear ! "

Jessica sniffed.

"What's forty ? I think I shall speak to Phyllis about him. He wants a good shake-up."

"Eh ? "

"I wonder ? " she said, slowly. "I wonder where that youngest boy of Carlton Meakin's could be found ? "

Edward Freemantle turned an astonished face to his wife.

"Why ever do you wonder that ? "

But she only laughed a perplexing little laugh.

"Have you been happy, Edward ? "

"Yes," he said. "I think very happy. I wonder why, sometimes."

He found she was looking at him and somehow it made him feel very content.

She dropped her eyes slowly, as old people must, and they settled on the last page. She pointed with a thin, almost transparent finger.

"Edward the third," she said, in a glowing voice.

Such a scrubby boy he was, all hands and feet and untidy hair.

"It's late, Jessica. Time we were abed."

"Yes," she nodded, and closed the book gently.

On the lowest stair, while he was lighting the candles, she said :—

"Edward, I've thought of something rather nice."

"Well ? "

"As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end."

"You didn't think of that, you old silly," he said.

"No, p'r'aps I didn't, but it's nice that ends are only beginnings, isn't it ? "

The two candles went twinkling up the stairs, gilding the rail and casting long shadows behind them.

Fifty Years of Song

by

COURTICE POUNDS

IN AN INTERVIEW

BY GLADYS BEATTIE CROZIER.

YES! I first sang in public at the age of nine, started rehearsing under W. S. Gilbert in the chorus of 'Patience' at eighteen, created the part of Colonel Fairfax in 'The Yeomen of the Guard' at the Savoy at twenty-six, and have been singing ever since!" remarked Mr. Courtice Pounds, cheerily, turning to greet me in his dressing-room at the Lyric Theatre with the radiantly boyish smile which makes the title of this article seem quite absurd!

"My first appearance on any stage was at the Victoria Theatre, where 'The Good Templars'—a 'Pussyfoot' Society of which my Uncle Courtice was a member—held meetings at which I was put up to sing temperance songs.

"One which I well remember ran:—

Father, dear Father, come home with me now,
The clock on the steeple strikes one!
You promised, dear father, that you would come home,
As soon as your day's work was done.'

It depicted the woes of a child singing outside a public-house at one o'clock a.m.—a contrast indeed to my recent part as the wine-bibbing Ali Baba in 'Chu Chin Chow'!

"I was soloist at St. Stephen's, South Kensington, from a very early age, for my mother, a fine musician, who had sung constantly at concerts and in opera before her marriage, taught me as quite a tiny child. She sang constantly at home, I, of course, copied her, and there was hardly an aria in any opera popular at that time that I didn't know when I was eight or ten!

"Perhaps I might claim to be one of the oldest variety artistes on the stage," went on Mr. Courtice Pounds, showing me a Royal Aquarium programme dated 1877. "You'll find the name of 'Master Charles C. Pounds' as soloist to the Royal Aquarium Choir amongst a list of attractions which include the Firing of Zazel from a Cannon, a Troupe of Performing Fleas, a Dramatic Sketch, in which Lionel Brough and Willie Edouin took part, and a Punch and Judy Show!

"At the Aquarium, all the performers had to dress in one big room, just off the 'Fish Hospital,' where ailing specimens were kept!

"At this time Arthur Sullivan was musical director at the Aquarium—his deputy being Mr. George Mount—and he had a fine orchestra which played classical music, for which one had to pay extra to get a seat.

"One afternoon when the orchestra was playing, Herr Wagner—in London for the Wagner Festival at the Albert Hall—came in, accompanied by a friend. He was immediately recognized by the members of the orchestra and their leader, Mr. Palmer, whose gratification at seeing him at once make his way towards the 'stalls' turned to horror as the commissionaire turned him back from the entrance and pointed to the pay-box! Shrugging his shoulders and obviously thoroughly 'disgruntled,' Herr Wagner and his friend turned on their heels, but as they slowly walked away Mr. Palmer beckoned me and hastily thrust money into my hand, saying 'Quick! Buy a couple of stalls, and present them with the compliments of the orchestra!' I did as I was bid and, tickets in hand, ran after the great man, and sweeping off my hat offered the seats, with the message. Herr Wagner waved them courteously aside, walked to the barrier, took off his hat with a low bow to the orchestra, and proceeded to the one row of free seats at the back, where he and his friend sat down for half an hour! Never

had the orchestra played better, and when Herr Wagner rose he lifted his hat a second time to the orchestra before taking his departure."

"But why did he refuse the seats?" I inquired.

"My impression was that he refused them on principle, thinking it was a gross thing to have to pay for special seats to hear the orchestra play!

'As a boy I had a remarkably wide compass, but after my voice broke I found that I had a very 'short voice'—whatever might be the value of its timbre. I felt I should never become what to my idea a tenor should be. I was already filling engagements all over the country, singing solos in choral societies and trying to get up to the A's in the 'Messiah' and to sing 'If with all your hearts' and 'Then shall the righteous shine' in 'Elijah.' It was 'high pitch' then, and it always seemed to me that I was trying more than I could really accomplish. It's a horrible feeling, standing up in front of a choir and knowing that you funk the high notes—the A flats and A naturals—when they come. I was still working hard at the Academy—I was only eighteen at the time—and had several chats with Garcia and Randegger, and told each of them that I felt my voice would never develop up there—and indeed it never did.

"At this period I was deputizing for Fred Walker, one of the Vicars - Choral at St. Paul's Cathedral—and in order to be officially appointed deputy I had to present myself for examination before Sir George Stainer (then Mr. Stainer). He heard me sing, took a sharp glance at me—I was a thin, miserable-looking sort of youth—and said: 'If you eat plenty of meat, my dear lad, you ought to have a future before you as a singer!'

"As a Vicar-Choral deputy I was paid two shillings and sixpence a service, with three shillings and sixpence on Sundays—not much to help one along; with thirty pounds a year at St. Stephen's as a solo singer and occasional odd two-guinea fees! So finally I decided to have a try for the stage. Fred Walker took me round to several people, and at the Alhambra, where they were doing *opéra bouffe*, we saw Jacobi, who looked at me and said: 'Oh, no; we don't want boys!'

"At last I wrote to D'Oyly Carte, and to impress on him that I was a little justified in making an application, I mentioned what Stainer had said. He replied asking me to be at the Opera Comique on a certain afternoon, when he would hear me sing. I went down on to the gloomy stage, with a single T-light drearily illuminating it, and a piano placed diagonally across one corner. At it was seated a gentleman whom I afterwards found to be Frank Cellier, while a man with a roughish face and voice, immaculately dressed and wearing the shiniest of toppers, who was directing operations, was Mr. Richard Barker, the stage-manager. A large number of other people were already waiting—men and girls—all of whom seemed to me beautifully dressed and completely at their ease. This appalled me, and I no doubt looked the miserable wretch I felt—I always was depressed by gloomy surroundings. I decided that I had no chance with all these magnificent beings. Time apssed, and D'Oyly Carte failed to appear. Finally Barker said to me: 'What do *you* want, my lad? We've already got a call-boy.'

"'I've come at the request of Mr. D'Oyly Carte to sing to him!' I replied. Eventually, Carte not coming, it was suggested that Frank Cellier should hear us sing. 'Come along,' said Mr. Barker, 'we'll start with you!'

"I boldly answered: 'Mr. Carte's not here yet—I'll wait until he arrives!'

"As the others sang, one by one, to be stopped at the end of the first verse, my heart went up—I began to feel I had a chance! When they were nearly all through, D'Oyly Carte, with the little quick, nervous way he had about him, hurried in, full of regrets at having been detained. 'This young fellow here,' said Barker, indicating me, 'wouldn't sing until you came!'

Photo: Courtenay Wynne.

Courtice Pounds as Treble Soloist in the choir of St. Stephen's, South Kensington.

"'What's your name?' asked Carte.

"'Pounds!' I replied.

"'I wrote to you? What's your voice? Tenor? You're the boy who said if you had plenty of meat you'd be a singer? Very well, I'll hear you.'

"I had brought a few songs with me, and Cellier chose Schubert's 'Serenade.' After the first verse Carte said: 'Finish it!' I did, and was quick to perceive I hadn't done so badly.

"'Well, what do you want to do?' asked Carte.

"'Play parts!'

"'How old are you? Eighteen? We've no "parts," but we've got a vacancy in the chorus for "The Pirates of Penzance." Just going to rehearse "Patience." You can come on here in the present piece and work yourself up as an understudy!'

"I accepted on the spot, going on for the last five weeks in 'The Pirates,' and keeping an eager look-out for chances of improving my position.

"One man I knew who had been with me in the choir at the Aquarium had a little 'business' to do, in releasing the Major-General in the last scene. I felt I could make more of it, and asked him if I might do it in his place. He was an easy-going sort of chap, and readily consented. I made the very most of it, and was immediately dropped on by Mr. Barker, who was a great martinet and ruled the chorus with a rod of iron!

"We all wore whiskers as Pirates, and one day I had the audacity to part mine in the middle in Lord Dundreary fashion. Mr. Barker at once took me to task. 'None of your Gaiety tricks here!' he said, and fined me half a crown!

"At the Savoy they put me to dress with a number of new tenors chosen by W. S. Gilbert. They were nearly all budding Marios, and, quickly realizing that I wasn't up to much on the upper notes, bawled their B flats and C's at me while we dressed. It was pandemonium in that dressing-room! The basses next door called it 'The Dogs' Home!' I got sick of dressing with ambitious tenors, and after playing many times, as understudy, the parts of the Duke and Archibald Grosvenor I went to Carte to remind him of his promise to take me out of the chorus and give me a chance to get on as soon as I had proved myself. He didn't seem to see it, so, hearing that a singer was wanted for the Moore and Burgess Minstrels, I went and sang to Mr. Moore at one of their rehearsals, and was engaged at a salary of seven pounds a week on the spot!

Courtice Pounds (on right) and Rutland Barrington as the two kings in the original production of "The Gondoliers."

Photo. Barraud.

"I went back to Mr. Carte to tell him I must regretfully give him a fortnight's notice! He was extremely surprised and vexed. 'What are you going to do? Sing in the Moore and Burgess Minstrels? Preposterous! Call a hansom and come along with me to see Arthur Sullivan!' And I was whisked down to Victoria Street.

"'This boy I've been speaking to you about has settled to go to the Moore and Burgess Minstrels. I want you to hear him sing, Arthur,' said Carte.

"Sullivan gave me something to sing from a MS. of his.

"'Beautifully sung and phrased! It would be madness, madness, to go to the Minstrels,' he said, when I had finished.

"They had a chat together in another room, and when we got back to the Savoy Mr. Carte said: 'I'll engage you for five years, and settle with Mr. Moore about releasing you.'

"'I go out of the chorus to-night?' I asked.

"'This week,' he said, and so it was arranged.

"I was put to dress in another room and given a part in a curtain-raiser they were then playing, 'Mock Turtles.' I was Mr. Wranglebury, an irascible, elderly gentleman who fussed about the breakfast eggs; and the little I had to sing was pitched far too low for me. Still, I was inordinately proud of my first part. One of my old friends came to see it. I met him afterwards, thinking I was going to get a little word of praise. He said I was 'awful,' with an adjective since made popular by Mrs. Patrick Campbell—which depressed me very much. He repeated it under his breath several times, and then said: 'Well, let's go to see Arthur Roberts!' We did, and heard him sing 'If I were only long enough, a soldier I would be.' The song had evidently given him an idea, for as we came out he said: 'Charlie, if you can't do better than what I saw you do to-night, I should enlist!'

"He is alive now, and has since grudgingly admitted that perhaps I was right in not taking him at his word!

"I played in this piece and worked hard at W. S. Gilbert's rehearsals, and when 'Iolanthe' was produced I understudied Lely until the following Christmas, when Carte asked me to go on tour with the first company of 'Iolanthe.' I set out reluctantly, and toured with 'Iolanthe' and the following Savoy production, 'Princess Ida,' until the spring of 1885. I then went to New York with 'The Mikado,' where I played the part of Nanki Poo, going on to Germany and Austria with the same company.

As Nanki Poo in "The Mikado."
Photo. Falk.

As Marco in "The Gondoliers."
"Take a Pair of Sparkling Eyes" was written by Sullivan specially to suit Courtice Pounds' voice.
Photo. Barraud.

"After playing for Carte in 'Ruddigore' in New York, I played many parts in the Stetson and Casino Light Opera companies, returning to London to create the part of Fairfax in 'The Yeomen of the Guard' at the Savoy in 1888.

"Rehearsals with Gilbert and Sullivan did not run too easily, despite Mrs. Carte's great tact in smoothing everybody down.

"Few people know, I think, that the lovely Elizabethan song 'Is Life a Boon?' was written no fewer than three times by Sullivan. The last setting was the best and completely satisfied Gilbert, who had, on hearing the two previous settings, shown such signs of restlessness that it was obvious he was not content.

"'How did he take it?' Sullivan asked me anxiously, after one of the rehearsals of the first setting.

"'He was very restless,' I replied.

"'I'll try another *tempo*,' said Sullivan, which he did. It fared little better than the first one.

"A third *tempo* was tried, giving just the required lilt to make it the perfect little gem it is, and Gilbert was delighted, though I, with *three* well-rehearsed versions in my head, had a *mauvais quart d'heure* waiting to sing it—all three jumbled up together in my first-night nervousness—until with the first notes from the orchestra I knew I was all right."

Older playgoers present at that famous first night still remember the ovation which Mr. Courtice Pounds received as the song finished.

"I recall one amusing incident which occurred after a 'command' performance at Windsor Castle of 'The Gondoliers,' in which I was playing Marco—Sullivan wrote 'A Pair of Sparkling Eyes' specially to suit my voice—with Rutland Barrington as Giuseppe," said Mr. Courtice Pounds. "It was the first theatrical performance that had been given at Windsor since the Prince Consort's death. Mr. Carte had two miniature scenes specially made to fit the Castle stage, which was a very much smaller one than ours. We closed at the Savoy that night, and played instead before Queen Victoria.

"Everything went perfectly. The company covered itself with glory, and after receiving many felicitations we sat down to a magnificent supper in the Vandyk room at the Castle. As the meal drew to a close Colonel Arthur Collins, who acted as our host, asked us to drink to the health of Her Majesty, and to sing 'God Save the Queen!'

"Alas, dear old Barrington, impetuously jumping up, started it so high that not even the highest soprano could have got through it in that key, and Colonel Arthur Collins, hastily mounting a chair, with a wave of his arm brought us to a stop, remarking courteously, 'Afraid our friend, Mr. Barrington, has pitched this too high for even the accomplished vocalists we have with us to-night. Would you allow *me* to give the note?' We took it from him and gave as hearty a rendering as has ever been heard inside the Castle walls!

"Afterwards, I had the privilege of a special tour of some of the private apartments of the Castle under his kindly guidance, a pleasure I much enjoyed.

"No, I have never played Jack Point in 'The Yeomen of the Guard,' but I played some of the clowns in Shakespeare at His Majesty's Theatre, with Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree, Touchstone in 'As You Like It,' and Feste in 'Twelfth Night.'

"I have the happiest recollections of my long association with Tree, who at once punningly dubbed me 'The Courteous One,' and proved the staunchest and most appreciative of friends. It was a pleasure to work for him," added Mr. Courtice Pounds, with a reminiscent sigh.

As Touchstone—one of his favourite parts.

From a portrait by Charles A. Buchel.

"My favourite song? One of my special favourites is Shakespeare's 'Come Away, Death,' with Augustus Barrett's setting, which I sang in Tree's production of 'Twelfth Night' at His Majesty's Theatre.

"I remember an incident which much amused us all at the first dress-rehearsal of 'Orpheus in the Underground' at His Majesty's," remarked Mr. Courtice Pounds, laughingly. "The scene opened on a romantic woodland glade, and as Eurydice entered, followed by her sheep, a storm of applause rose from the front. 'A special tribute to the scenery,' we supposed, but in another moment realized that the applause was for the sheep, who were almost coal-black, having come straight from Regent's Park in foggy weather!

"My favourite parts? Feste and Touchstone. Nanki Poo, the Novice in 'La Poupée,' and Papillon in 'The Duchess of Dantzic' were specially grateful parts to play. Ali Baba in 'Chu Chin Chow' was another fine part," he added.

"Yes, indeed, it is possible to forget not only the words of a song, but also even the tune, after endless repetition! I myself never forget a tune, but after the thousandth night of 'Chu Chin Chow' I think there were few amongst us who did not suffer from lapses of memory—'dry-ups' they call them. The musical director noticed, of course, and the members of the orchestra would exchange amused glances, but, as a rule, none of the audience knew.

As Papillon in "The Duchess of Dantzic."
Photo. Hall.

"I had one real let-down, and luckily only one, in my theatrical career, and that ended happily! It was when we were rehearsing for 'The Duchess of Dantzic,' in which I played Papillon, the Court dancing-master and costumier, who 'forms the taste, and moulds the waist, of the Empress Josephine.'

"It was a part which my dear old friend Harry Hamilton, the author, always had me in his mind for. One day at rehearsal I noticed they all looked grave, and presently Bobbie Courtneidge, the producer, said: 'I want to see you upstairs.'

"'I don't know how to break it to you,' he said to me later, 'but you're not going to play the part! Edwardes is bringing in Arthur Roberts to do it! Both Harry Hamilton and I are awfully upset about it—he asked *me* to tell you.'

"Off I went home, where I stayed for two or three days, as blue as I ever felt in my life! Then a most unexpected telegram arrived: 'Please attend rehearsal in morning—you play the part,' signed 'Robert Courtneidge.' When I got down they all broke off and everybody cheered me and shook me by the hand, and it was quite an appreciable time before Bobbie could get on with his rehearsal.

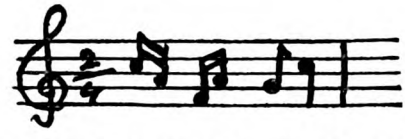
"It appeared that Arthur Roberts had come down and tried the part and decided he wouldn't undertake it!"

It was a part which proved one of the greatest "hits" of Mr. Courtice Pounds' career, as all older playgoers will remember.

Noting the absurdly boyish twinkle in his eye, I was not surprised to hear that Mr. Pounds dearly loved a practical joke, and has many an absurd tale to tell of the pranks played upon his fellow-artistes in the early days at the Savoy.

"Charles Harris—brother of Sir Augustus Harris—a fine stage-manager, but, alas! apt to relapse into the strongest of strong language if things did not go to his liking at a rehearsal—was engaged by the D'Oyly Cartes to rehearse 'Mirette' at the Savoy on the distinct understanding that the engagement must terminate if strong language were employed towards a single member of the company.

"Now the D'Oyly Cartes and their intimates—Sullivan, Harris, and Cellier—had a special whistle—it went like this:—



with which they would call one another at rehearsals. I, of course, knew the whistle, and could imitate it perfectly—and when Charles Harris, exasperated by the mistakes at a bad rehearsal, was obviously with the utmost difficulty holding himself in from one of the blasphe-

mous explosions with which he had heretofore been wont to relieve his outraged feelings, I, having ascertained that Mr. Carte was not in the theatre, would creep from balcony to balcony, and when an explosion seemed imminent would emit the famous whistle. Poor Harris, thinking Carte was checking him, would shout imploringly into the darkened auditorium: 'I didn't say a bad word, D'Oyly!' or 'Sorry, D'Oyly, I only said D——!' to the huge delight of the company, who were all in the joke.

"He had certainly much to try him; as, for instance, when Avon Saxon had to raise and point an imaginary gun—to suit the action to the words—at the climax of the play. Every time when this point was reached he would break down, crying despairingly: 'I haven't got a gun, Mr. Harris!' 'Give him a walking-stick!' growled the indignant Harris. This same 'stop' came at rehearsals every time. Saxon simply could not imitate the action of a man pointing a gun without something in his hands! Knowing this, I one day hid all the sticks; the usual 'break-off' occurred, and, as no suitable weapon could be found, the rehearsal came to an ignominious conclusion. To make amends I hastened to the Lowther Arcade and bought a minute sixpenny or shilling gun, and, while the company were out at lunch, managed, by an ingenious manipulation of a swivel hook fixed in the flies and a long string and a pulley, to arrange it so that at the next rehearsal, when the stumbling-block was again reached and Mr. Saxon despairingly said: 'I haven't got a gun,' this ridiculous weapon was miraculously lowered into his outstretched hands!

As Schubert in "Lilac Time."
Stage Photo Co.

"No one had a greater love for a practical joke than Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree. Once when I was playing in Dublin with an 'all star' company, which included Tree, Asche, and Lionel Brough, the whole company went on a holiday jaunt in side-cars to Powers Court Waterfall. Just before starting back, Tree and Asche said: 'Let's play a lark on old Lal. We'll put him in the car in front of us, with Pounds—to whom he can't tell his tales, because he knows them all!—another chap he hates, the property-master, who's stone-deaf, and with no outlet but the driver—*bribing him not to see a joke!*'

"The plot worked to perfection. Old Lal climbed up and settled himself down comfortably, lighted his pipe, looked round to see whom he could tell some tales to—and, noting his company, started them on the driver! Tree, just before we went off, had whispered a few urgent instructions to that worthy man, while pressing a five-shilling tip into his hand.

"'Brough will sit next to you,' he said, 'and want to tell you tales—you mustn't think them funny. Five shillings now and five shillings more at the end of the trip, if you've earned it! At the end of each tale all you are to say is: "And then, sir?"'

"Lal started in his best style an excruciatingly funny yarn, with a particularly witty climax. 'And then, sor?' dully asked the driver. A bit surprised, Lal tried again—to meet the same response. Then, turning impatiently to me and remarking 'The man must be a fool!' he made one or two final efforts, with a growing look of absolute disgust, before relapsing into indignant silence. An hour later, towards the end of the drive, the famous 'Spike' on Killiney Hill came into sight. 'That's the Spike on Killiney Hill!' remarked Brough, relenting. 'And then, sor?' returned the jarvey, warily, still mindful of his further tip—which finished Brough completely!

"It's an awful thing to be suddenly deprived of your dresser for a difficult make-up, and to have to make do with a

substitute ! " remarked Mr. Courtice Pounds, reminiscently.

" In ' Cairo,' where Oscar Asche had that big wrestling scene, one of his dresser's special jobs was to see that the resin in which he had to rub his feet before the bout, to save slipping, was placed in exactly the right place on the stage.

" One night his dresser was absent, ill, and a nervous substitute took his place, who swiftly, as the night went on, got more and more on Oscar's nerves. He began badly. The wide body-band which formed a large part of Oscar's attire consisted of yards and yards of stuff, which had to be skilfully wound round him. In his nervousness the new dresser stumbled when the job was nearly done, was shouted at by Oscar, and in his fright hastily started to go round him the wrong way, unwinding him again ! ' I'm not quite up to it yet, Mr. Asche,' cried the poor chap, apologetically, ' but I have remembered the resin for your shoes ! ' And so he had ! Crushing the resin, he had put it inside the shoes, where Oscar found it, during the scene, and as he warmed to his work it gradually melted ! It took days to get it out ! "

" How long does it take to make up for Schubert ? " I asked, gazing at Mr. Courtice Pounds' most excellent disguise.

" Less than five minutes," he replied. " That is, with the help of my very skilful dresser.

" Unless I can make up for a new part between the time when the overture is called and I get upon the stage—even when I am opening the scene—I feel that the piece will not be a success. It's my only stage superstition !

" For Nanki Poo, in ' The Mikado,' I used to start to get out of street clothes and into tights just as the orchestra started, and come on at the end of the first chorus dressed as you see me here," he said, handing me the photograph reproduced amongst the illustrations.

" In ' Chu Chin Chow ' I had one remarkably quick change—just after singing ' Kissing Time ' —for which I had only three minutes to get upstairs to my dressing-room and down again."

" *Do* tell me," I asked in conclusion, looking at the photograph (here reproduced) showing him as the wine-bibbing Ali Baba in " Chu Chin Chow," and eager to learn the vintage that appeared to give such exquisite delight, " what was in that bottle ! "

" Alas ! it was empty ! " Mr. Courtice Pounds laughingly replied. " Asche ordered it to be filled with Guinness for me, but I found I couldn't drink it down quickly enough to get on with the business, so I regretfully cut it out.

" Yes. We do really drink in ' Lilac Time '—a most horrible decoction ! " he added. " However, we have anticipations that the brew may shortly be improved. Meanwhile I drink as little as I can, and discreetly empty most of my share into some other glass, whenever I can snatch the chance !

" Stage drinks are always a problem. I've often had to drink ginger ale and imagine it was wine ! And, oh ! there are many brands, and the property master, from motives of economy, no doubt, usually supplies the cheapest and nastiest."

As the jovial Ali Baba in " Chu Chin Chow."

Photo. F. W. Burford.

THE TERRIBLE HOBBY OF SIR JOSEPH LONDE, BART.

No. 1.—THE SCARLET PATCH.

BY

E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM

ILLUSTRATED BY S. SEYMOUR LUCAS

AT half-past twelve on a blustery morning in March, a middle-aged, neatly-dressed man of powerful appearance, who had settled down in the neighbourhood under the name of Mr. Joseph Britton, turned into the main street of the small town of Dredley, in Surrey, pushed open the swing doors of the offices of Messrs. Harrison and Co., land and house agents, and tapped on the mahogany counter with the crook of his stick. Mr. Harrison at once emerged from his private office. The two men exchanged greetings.

"I want to sell my house," Mr. Britton announced.

The house agent looked at his visitor over the top of his spectacles with some surprise.

"Why, Mr. Britton, I thought you'd settled down for life amongst us," he said, slowly drawing his ledger towards him. "You're not leaving the neighbourhood, I hope?"

"I'm having some trouble with my wife," the other explained. "She has worked herself up into a nervous state about these two extraordinary disappearances."

Mr. Harrison's expression was one of somewhat irritated concern.

"Come, that's too bad," he remonstrated. "If everyone were to adopt that attitude, what would become of the price of property in the neighbourhood? Why, you'd ruin us all."

"I can't help the price of property," Mr. Britton replied, coldly. "We've no children, and my wife's the only person I have to consider in the world. It's seeing the policemen about the lane, I expect, that has upset her."

"Take her away for a change, Mr. Britton," the house agent advised. "Don't you go throwing away a nice little property that you've just bought, because of a lady's spell of nervousness. Give her a month at Brighton, and she'll come back a different woman."

"I am afraid the matter is too serious for that," the other sighed. "I have no desire to part with the house, just having settled down, but I have given my word, and there we are. Take down the particulars."

"I don't need any," was the reluctant reply. "It isn't a couple of years since I sold you the place. What do you want for it?"

"I gave four thousand pounds for it," Mr. Britton reflected, "and they say property has increased in value. I'll consider any offer."

"Why, you must have spent hundreds upon the garden alone," Mr. Harrison remonstrated.

"A thousand pounds wouldn't cover what I've spent on the place, one way and another. All the same, I've passed my word of honour that down it goes into your books. If you don't sell it, I can't help it."

"Well, I'm glad the other residents aren't adopting your attitude," Mr. Harrison grumbled. "After all, these two disappearances might be cleared up at any moment. They may be entirely voluntary."

"That is precisely what I have pointed out to my wife," Mr. Britton acquiesced.

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"In my opinion, the police are only advertising their incompetence by hanging about the place and making senseless inquiries. People don't disappear nowadays except of their own choice."

"I quite agree with you," the house agent assented. "Lot of fuss about nothing, I call it. Will you take a glass of sherry with me, Mr. Britton, before you go?"

"With pleasure!" was the courteous response.

The two men left the place together and entered the adjoining hotel. Dredley was one of those half-urban, half-suburban town-villages, which mock the wayfarer from London who thinks that thirty miles from the Metropolis should bring him to the country. The shops were mostly branches of larger establishments, and the hotel retained its kinship to a public-house. The house agent and his client established themselves in hard, horsehair easy-chairs in an inner smokeroom. The floor was covered with oilcloth, the walls hung with chromo advertisements. The young lady who waited upon them was affable but towny. With the second order for refreshments, she brought out a local newspaper.

"After all this fuss!" she exclaimed. "Bert Endell's people have heard from him at Newcastle, where he's got a job, and Mr. Lancaster's written to his family from somewhere in London."

Mr. Harrison pounced upon the paper.

"That's right!" he cried. "Well, I never! What about it now, Mr. Britton?"

"I should think that might possibly modify my wife's prejudice against the place," was the somewhat doubtful reply. "Keep the house on the books and I'll let you know."

THE two men separated soon afterwards, and Mr. Joseph Britton walked homewards. He was a man apparently of early middle-age, of medium height, powerful build, and inconspicuous appearance. He was clean-shaven, with black hair unstreaked with grey, massive jaw, firm mouth, but curiously restless eyes. Of his antecedents nobody knew anything; but his banker's reference had been unexceptionable, and his manners and speech were the attributes of a man of culture. The very pleasant residence which he had purchased some two years ago was situated on the side of the heath, about a mile and a half from the town. It was built of white stone half-covered with creepers, and there was about an acre of garden, bounded on one side by a long and narrow footpath which crossed the heath and led into the town. Mr. Britton looked meditatively across at the rock garden, which was in the course of construction, as he rang his front-door bell. The idea was, without doubt, a good one. The proposed addition backed up against the thin hedge which separated the footpath from his garden. It would, in time, shield the house from passers-by. The door was opened by a man-servant, sombrely dressed, and of uncouth and aggressive appearance. He took his master's hat and coat and glanced at the clock with an air of disapproval.

"Luncheon is on the table, sir," he announced, gruffly.

Mr. Britton nodded, and opened the door of the dining-room. A woman who was already seated at the small round table looked up at his coming.

"Have you sold the house?" she asked, eagerly.

"I have placed it in the agent's hands," he replied.

She continued her luncheon in silence, a striking-looking woman, if not beautiful, with pale cheeks, strange haunting eyes, and masses of beautiful brown hair. She was gazing steadfastly out of the window which looked on to the heath.

"It seems," he went on, "that both the disappearances which have been troubling the people of the neighbourhood are accounted for. The relatives of Mr. Lancaster have heard from him, and young Endell has written his mother from Newcastle."

His wife looked at him—a long and steady gaze from her wonderful eyes. She said nothing at all.

"It was in the local paper," he continued. "It will be in the London papers to-morrow."

The meal, served by the gloomy and taciturn man servant, was finished in silence. At its conclusion they made their way into a small library and seated themselves in easy-chairs before a huge log fire. Mr. Britton at once took up a book and became engrossed in its contents. The woman neither read nor attempted any sort of needlework. There was no window open in the room, yet occasionally she shivered. She sat with her hands folded in front of her, her eyes sometimes fixed upon the fire, sometimes engaged in a steady contemplation of her husband's face. The latter remained completely absorbed. There was no attempt at conversation.

The day was cloudy and twilight came early. At five o'clock the butler served tea, which was partaken of by the woman only. She drank three cups greedily. Then she left the room again. When she reappeared, she was wearing a handsome fur coat and a small, becoming hat with a veil, behind which her eyes seemed stranger and more

beautiful than ever. Her husband gripped the sides of his chair and looked at her.

"You are going out?" he inquired.

"I am going to take a walk across the heath," she replied.

He rose slowly to his feet. For some reason or other, the statement seemed to affect him. He walked to the window and looked out. A belt of pine trees loomed like a black smudge at the end of the garden The single trees and shrubs bordering the footpath had assumed chaotic shapes, more fanciful than ever by reason of the fantasies of a high wind. The footpath across the heath was dimly visible. A solitary tradesman's boy on a bicycle was making his way towards one of the large houses on the other side.

"It's a wild evening," he muttered.

The woman laughed, oddly but not unpleasantly.

"I love wind," she said, "wind and the falling darkness."

She left the room. The man remained at the window. He watched her cross the lawn, step over the strands of wire at the farther end of the garden, and pass along the footpath. He watched her slim form as she came into sight on the other side of the trees, moving with swift and effortless grace into the bosom of the darkness and the booming wind. Then he turned away, left the room, and, walking all the time with a curious mechanical effect, almost as though in a state of coma, he unlocked with a key from his chain the door of a small room behind the stairs. For a moment he paused to listen. Then he entered the room, closing the door behind him.

DANIEL ROCKE looked up from the desk in his newly-acquired office, and gazed with some interest at his unexpected visitor. Miss Ann Lancaster subsided into the chair to which he had instinctively pointed, and laid her muff on the floor by her side.

"You remember me, Mr. Rocke?" she began.

"Quite well," he answered. "You were one of our cipher typists at the Foreign Office."

She nodded.

"I am still engaged there," she said.

There was a brief pause. Miss Lancaster seemed in no hurry to declare her mission, and Daniel Rocke, without displaying undue curiosity, was interested in renewing his impressions of her. At the Foreign Office she had just been one in a dozen, a little distinguished from the others, perhaps, only on account of her superior intelligence. He had certainly never appreciated before the small, excellently-shaped head, the glints of a richer colour in her deep brown hair, her clear hazel eyes and delicate eyebrows, her pale complexion, creamy rather than pallid. She was of medium height and slim figure, distinctly feminine, but with the subtle possession of poise. In the long, bare room at the Foreign Office, Rocke would never have glanced at her twice. Here, in his rather shabby little apartment at the top of a block of buildings in Shaftesbury Avenue, she was a different person. She, too, from her point of view, found some interest in studying more closely this person whom she had come to visit. She remembered him merely as a man of about thirty-five years of age, of medium height, pallid-faced, with somewhat cynical mouth, and the fretful ways of a hypochondriac. He had the reputation of extreme cleverness, and he had more than once charmed the whole room by a rare but very delightful smile. His gracious moments, however, were very occasional, and the chief impression she had formed of him during their period of more or less close association was of a man swift in intuition, capable but short-tempered, a man with an indomitable capacity for mastering any obstacle which came in his way, but impatient of all delay or interruption.

"May I ask why you left the Foreign Office?" she inquired at last.

He raised his eyebrows very slightly. The question, coming in that form, surprised him.

"You may ask," he replied.

She was unperturbed.

"Impertinent of me, of course," she remarked, "but I am on serious business and my mind is filled with serious things. The report there was that, since the war, you had only been sent abroad four times, and that you were tired of doing nothing but decoding ciphers."

"The report, for once, was absolutely accurate," Rocke admitted.

"It was further reported," the girl continued, "that you were thinking of seeking a post in the Foreign Intelligence Department of Scotland Yard."

"That is where rumour failed," he answered. "If I am to take you into my confidence at all, I will tell you that I am weary of officialdom. And now, suppose you tell me what you have come to see me about?"

"Doesn't my name suggest my mission," she inquired—"Ann Lancaster?"

"Not in the slightest."

"You have read of the Dredley disappearances?"

"Yes," he acknowledged.

"My father was James Lancaster, the first one to go," she confided. "He went

out for half an hour's walk on the heath whilst they were getting his supper ready, and never returned."

"But I thought that was all explained now," he observed. "I thought that a letter had been received from your father, and also from the other young man who disappeared."

"That is where these 'mysterious disappearances,' as the Press used to call them, really do begin to be mysterious," the girl replied. "I have seen both letters. I know nothing about the young man who wrote from Newcastle, but I am perfectly convinced that the communication which came to us with the postmark 'Bethnal Green'

without me. I have found some work in a quiet spot. I shall return before long.

Affectionately,

JAMES LANCASTER.

"You do not believe that this came from your father?" Rocke inquired.

"I am sure that it did not."

"Why?"

"My father was a quiet, home-loving man," she explained, "unadventurous and contented. I have been to see his employers. They were perfectly satisfied with him, and they scoffed at the idea of his being in any sort of discreditable trouble."

"Have you been to Scotland Yard?"

"You do not believe that this letter came from your father?" Rocke inquired. "I am sure that it did not."

was neither typed nor dictated by my father."

"Have you the letter with you?" he asked.

She produced it—a half-sheet of common notepaper, on which the few sentences were roughly typed :—

My dear Wife and Daughters,—

I am in trouble and obliged to lie low for a few months. Do as well as you can

"Yes," she replied. "They were very non-committal. They went so far as to tell me that half the mysterious disappearances we hear about are hoaxes. They took a copy of the letter and promised to make inquiries; but we are not able to offer a reward, and I am quite certain that they intend to do nothing further in the matter."

"What about the letter from the young man?" he asked.

"I borrowed that from his mother to

show to you," she announced, producing another sheet of paper.

"Also typewritten," he murmured.

She nodded.

"Also, I believe, a fraud."

The letter was typed upon a sheet of expensive paper which might have been the stationery of a commercial firm of repute. The printed address at the top, and telephone number, had been cut out. The letter itself consisted only of a single sentence :—

To Mrs. Endell.

Madam,

Your son, Herbert Endell, has found employment with a firm in this town, and desires me to let you know that he is well and happy.

"No reasons for disappearance given in either case," Rocke pointed out.

"None at all," she replied. "In my opinion, this letter is as fraudulent as the other one."

He laid them side by side upon his desk and studied them for a moment. Then he folded them up and returned them to the girl.

"If one is to accept your theory," he remarked, "the fact of your father's disappearance, and this young man's, becomes more mysterious than ever."

"Quite true," she assented.

"What do you wish me to do about it ?"

"Leave off decoding silly cipher messages and turn your attention to something worth while," she told him, bluntly. "I know a great deal about your work at the Foreign Office. It wasn't always what it seemed to be. It was you who tracked down Nicholas Green at Bristol——"

"That will do," he interrupted. "Tell me where I can communicate with you when I get there. I shall go down to Dredley by the next train."

"A GENTLEMAN to see over the house, sir," the uncouth-looking butler announced, ushering Daniel Rocke into the dining-room of Heathside on the following afternoon.

Mr. Joseph Britton laid down the volume which he had been studying. His wife looked eagerly up from the depths of her easy-chair.

"I hope I have not called at an inconvenient time ?" Rocke observed. "Mr. Harrison, the agent, told me that I could see over the place at any hour."

"You are perfectly in order, sir," the tenant of Heathside declared, courteously, as he rose to his feet. "I will show you over myself, with pleasure. The house has many good points, but my wife desires a change."

The woman looked across at their visitor. He was at once aware of the spell of her eyes.

"It is really my husband who wishes to travel," she said, softly. "Am I to show Mr.——"

"Mr. Rocke," he put in.

"Mr. Rocke over the house, or will you, Joseph ?"

"I will show him over myself," was the brusque reply.

Rocke fancied that there was a shadow of disappointment in the woman's face as she resumed her task. Her husband, however, bustled him out of the room. The business of inspecting the upper apartments was soon concluded. Looking downward from the front bedroom, Mr. Britton noticed a taxicab standing outside.

"Is that your cab ?" he asked.

The prospective tenant of Heathside nodded.

"I told him to wait."

Daniel Rocke's close watch for anything in the least unusual connected with these two people—the only residents in the vicinity who seemed suddenly anxious to change their quarters—was at last rewarded. There was a look of almost venomous disappointment in his companion's face as he gazed down at the harmless taxicab. It was an expression which lingered only for a moment, but it was unmistakable. Daniel Rocke, affecting to notice nothing, turned away.

"Rather lazy of me not to walk up," he remarked, "but I had eighteen holes at golf this morning, and want to finish up with a little practice later on. I shall be interested to see what accommodation you have on the ground floor."

"My wife and I are quiet people," Mr. Britton explained, as he led the way downstairs, "and we live nearly altogether in the dining-room and my small study. This is the drawing-room, however—a fine room, but we've never properly furnished it. This is my study," he added, showing a small apartment, the walls of which were lined with bookcases. "Cosy, as you see, but a little cramped."

Daniel Rocke was examining the volumes.

"Are you a medical man, Mr. Britton ?" he asked, pointing to one of the rows of books.

"Only an amateur," was the curt reply. "Come along."

"Interested in Australia, too, I see," his visitor continued, pausing before another shelf. "A colonist, by any chance ?"

"No," was the short rejoinder. "The

books were an inheritance. Would you like to see the gardens now ? "

" What is this room ? " Daniel inquired, pausing before the door with the Yale lock under the stairs.

" Little more than a cupboard. I keep some oddments there—golf clubs and things."

Daniel measured with his eye the distance between the door of the next room and the window on the left.

" It must be a very large cupboard," he remarked. " Can I have a look at it ? "

" Next time you call, with pleasure," the other replied. " As a matter of fact, I have mislaid the key."

Daniel nodded. He seemed indifferent about the matter, but he added another fact to his little store.

" The gardens aren't much, but perhaps you would like to see them," his companion suggested, leading the way out of doors.

On the whole, they certainly justified their tenant's criticism. In the corner near the footpath, however, a very elaborate rock garden was in course of erection.

" You've put in a lot of work there," Daniel observed, thoughtfully.

" I have indeed," was the somewhat grudging admission. " Dug every foot of the ground with my own hands. Waste of time, too, I'm inclined to think now. If I were buying the place, I'd pull it down and make a hard tennis-court on the top."

" A capital idea," Daniel assented. " Your agent asked me four thousand pounds for the house. Is that your lowest ? "

" Not if price is a material object," Mr. Britton answered, with ill-concealed eagerness. " The fact of it is, we want to get away. My wife is nervous. She wants a change, and at once. I'd like to make a clean job of it, if I could."

" If I decide to buy the house, I will make you an offer, then, through Mr. Harrison," Daniel promised.

" Why not clinch the business now ? " the other proposed.

Daniel shook his head, smiling, as he stepped into his waiting taxicab.

" You shall have definite news in the morning," he assured him.

DANIEL ROCKE caught a fast train to town, and arrived at a great public office at half-past three. He made his way to a department which had flourished hugely during the war, but which was now considerably reduced in numbers and was in fact in process of reconstruction. The Chief, Colonel Sir Francis Worton, K.C.B., D.S.O., received him as an old friend.

" What brings you here, Daniel ? " he inquired, pushing across a box of cigarettes.

" I came to ask for your help," was the prompt reply. " Give me a clean sheet of blotting-paper, will you ? That's right. Now let me have sixty seconds to complete this work of art."

With a few deft touches he produced a very reasonable likeness of Mr. Joseph Britton.

" Look here," he continued. " I am in search of a man, probably a criminal, who served through the war in some capacity or other, who was probably an Australian, and from whose hands, and other evidence, I should gather was either a doctor or a surgeon. He is living with his wife in Surrey, and that is an impression of him."

Daniel Rocke.

The Chief glanced at the sketch and nodded approvingly.

" Great gift, that, Daniel," he declared. " Certainly I can tell you the man's name, and all about him."

" Get on with it, please, then. The matter is urgent."

" If it's a criminal affair, or anything of that sort, you are going to be disappointed," Sir Francis warned his visitor. " That is a picture of Joseph Londe, the Australian surgeon, who was given a baronetcy by the King. He was one of the first of the really great surgeons of the world in France, and, poor devil, he paid for it ! "

" Tell me about it," Daniel begged.

" He rigged up a sort of travelling field

hospital for operations, and they say that during the Mons *débâcle* he sometimes had as many as sixty or seventy bad cases on his hands at a time. Nothing seemed to tire him. He was three years out there —but then, of course, you've read about him. Very few people know the end of his story, however."

"Tell it me at once, please."

Sir Francis sighed.

"It was very sad," he continued. "One night, after a simply terrible seven or eight hours' work—it was in that Cambrai affair —Londe and his head nurse both went raving mad. They hushed it all up, but he killed two men before they could get hold of him. He and the nurse were both brought home to an asylum somewhere near London. It was only last year I heard that they were discharged as cured."

"And what became of them?"

"I believe that they went quietly back to Australia."

Daniel rose to his feet.

"I'm immensely obliged, Worton," he acknowledged. "If you'll lunch with me at the club the day after to-morrow, I'll tell you all about it."

"Done, my lad," was the hearty response. "One o'clock sharp, mind. I'm on duty again at two."

DANIEL found time to call at his rooms, where he slipped a small revolver into his pocket. He then caught the next available train to Dredley, where, on the platform, he had a few very fortunate words with Miss Ann Lancaster. Afterwards he took a taxicab direct to the golf club, drank a whisky-and-soda, and, with half-a-dozen balls in his pocket and a mashie in his hand, strolled out to a distant part of the course. In time he reached a green bordering the straight footpath which bisected the heath and stretched to Dredley. He spent some little time practising short approaches. Then he stood up and looked reflectively down the path. A woman was coming towards him, veiled and cloaked, yet unmistakable. He devoted himself assiduously to a series of wrist shots, and was just collecting the balls, which he had played on to the green, when the woman paused. He looked up. Once more the spell of her eyes was upon him. He raised his cap.

"Come and talk to me," she invited. "It must be too dark for you to play. I want to know whether you are really thinking about the house."

They strolled back together, side by side. The woman's voice was pleasant, almost caressing.

"I am so anxious," she told him, "to know whether there is any chance of your buying Heathside. I want to get away. This place is beginning to stifle me. I can't sleep. Do you know what it is not to be able to sleep, Mr. Rocke?"

"Often," he answered—"during the war."

She started. For a single moment there was something approaching horror in her pale face.

"If I were to let myself think of those days," she continued, softly, "I should never sleep again. If I were to think of the shrieks of agony, the horrible sights they brought in from the firing-line, I should go mad."

"You were in France?" he asked.

"Yes!" she answered briefly, with the air of one wishing to abandon the subject. "Mr. Rocke, buy our house. He gave four thousand pounds for it. Offer him three—two—anything! I cannot stay here any longer."

They had reached that part of the footpath now which bordered the gardens of Heathside on one hand and the gardens of another house on the other. The twilight was merging into darkness. Daniel was a brave man, but he suddenly wished that he had adopted other tactics. His hand stole into the pocket where his revolver lay concealed. He felt her fingers slip underneath his other arm.

"Men don't understand nerves," she whispered. "I am afraid—afraid of life! I want someone strong."

Her fingers tore at her throat. Something fell glittering on to the path. He stooped to pick it up. There was a sound like whistling close to his ears, a jerk around his neck, a sense of stifling. He was vaguely conscious of a man stepping over the wire strand from the garden of Heathside, something was held to his nose, he seemed enveloped by an odour, partly of faded flowers, partly suggestive of an anæsthetic. Then the house began to move towards him, the shrubs passed him in solemn procession, an open door swallowed him up into a black gulf. He was in the hall of the house he had called to inspect earlier in the day. He was in the room behind the stairs, the door of which Britton had opened with a Yale key. He was lying down. The sense of suffocation began to pass, his head grew clearer, only his limbs seemed numbed. The control of his tongue came back.

"What the devil are you up to?" he cried, weakly.

Britton turned round from a cupboard with a long black case in his hand. He spread it out upon a table—a case of surgical instruments, with tempered blue steel glittering in the electric light. He had taken off his coat and put on a white linen duster.

There was a jerk around his neck, a sense of stifling—he was vaguely conscious of something held to his nose.

He looked at his victim with placid content through the lenses of a pair of horn-rimmed spectacles.

"Capital! Capital!" he exclaimed. "I really believe—I honestly believe that you are the man I have been seeking for years."

"What the mischief do you want with me?" Daniel demanded, trying in vain to sit up.

"Just to have a look at your brain," was the pleasant reply.

"My—my what?" Daniel gasped.

"Your brain," the other repeated, taking one of the knives from the box and examining it critically. "By the by, you know who I am, of course? I am Sir Joseph Londe, the greatest surgeon in the world. I have performed more operations than there are stars in the sky. Unfortunately, one day a small portion of my brain went red. There was a great deal of red about in those days. You are not a medical man, I believe?"

"No!"

"Useless to try to explain to you, then," Londe continued, affably. "As a matter of fact, so long as I cannot replace that little portion of red brain, I am mad. They had to put me in an asylum for two years, and I may have to go back again some day, unless I can find a man with a natural-coloured brain, from which I can help myself. I've tried two—miserable subjects they were—scarlet patches all over. In you, however, I have absolute confidence."

"How are you going to get at my brain?" Daniel found strength to ask.

"Cut it out, of course," the other explained. "You needn't have the least alarm. I am the greatest operator in the world."

"And what do you do with me afterwards?"

The surgeon chuckled.

"Bury you in the rock garden," he replied. "I call it my cemetery. Now, if you will be so kind as to stay quite still——"

"Stop!" Daniel insisted, struggling to hide his terror. "I am interested in new discoveries. I must know what that stuff was that you gave me to smell?"

His torturer smiled.

"I am almost as versed in the byways of science as I am infallible with the knife," he confided. "That stuff is an invention of my own. Its results are more wonderful than any anæsthetic, but it has no deleterious effect upon the brain. You can understand all that I say, and you can even converse with me. Yet you could not move either your arm or your foot more than an inch or two."

"How long—does its influence last?"

"About another ten minutes. That reminds me, I must not waste any more time. The last subject I had was not nearly so well-mannered as you. I left it a little too late, and I had to use very violent means to keep him quiet."

The surgeon took a step forward. The knife shone before Daniel's horrified eyes like a line of silver. He tried to shout, but his voice rose scarcely above a whisper. He felt the touch of those cool, strong fingers on the back of his head. It must surely be the end!

AT the very last moment came an unexpected respite. Heavy footsteps had passed the closely-curtained window. The bell of the front door pealed through the house.

"You had better see who that is," Daniel faltered. "It may be someone with a better brain than mine."

The surgeon crept stealthily to the window. When he came back his face was ghastly. He replaced the knife, and locked the case up in the cupboard from which he had taken it, hung up his duster, and changed back again into his tweed coat. Then he looked at Daniel and his expression was terrible. The glitter of cunning had crept into his eyes—cunning and fear.

"I shall have to leave you, my poor fellow," he said, harshly. "There are hundreds who need me more. I am called away—a worse case."

Again the summons of the bell pealed through the house. Londe hesitated no longer. He stole from the room, closing the door quietly behind him. Daniel found himself able to move his arms and legs a little. He swung himself into a sitting posture. Again the bell rang. He heard the sound of stealthy voices in the hall, then silence, after which he fancied that he heard a far-away door opened and closed. The ringing of the bell now became more and more imperative. He dragged himself to the window. There were two policemen there—and Ann. He managed to tap feebly. Soon they heard him. He caught a glimpse of Ann's terrified face outside. Then one of the policemen forced the lower window with a clasp-knife. They were soon in the room. Daniel was just able to stammer now, and his voice was almost steady.

"Britton's a lunatic!" he gasped. "Get him if you can. I should have been a dead man in sixty seconds!"

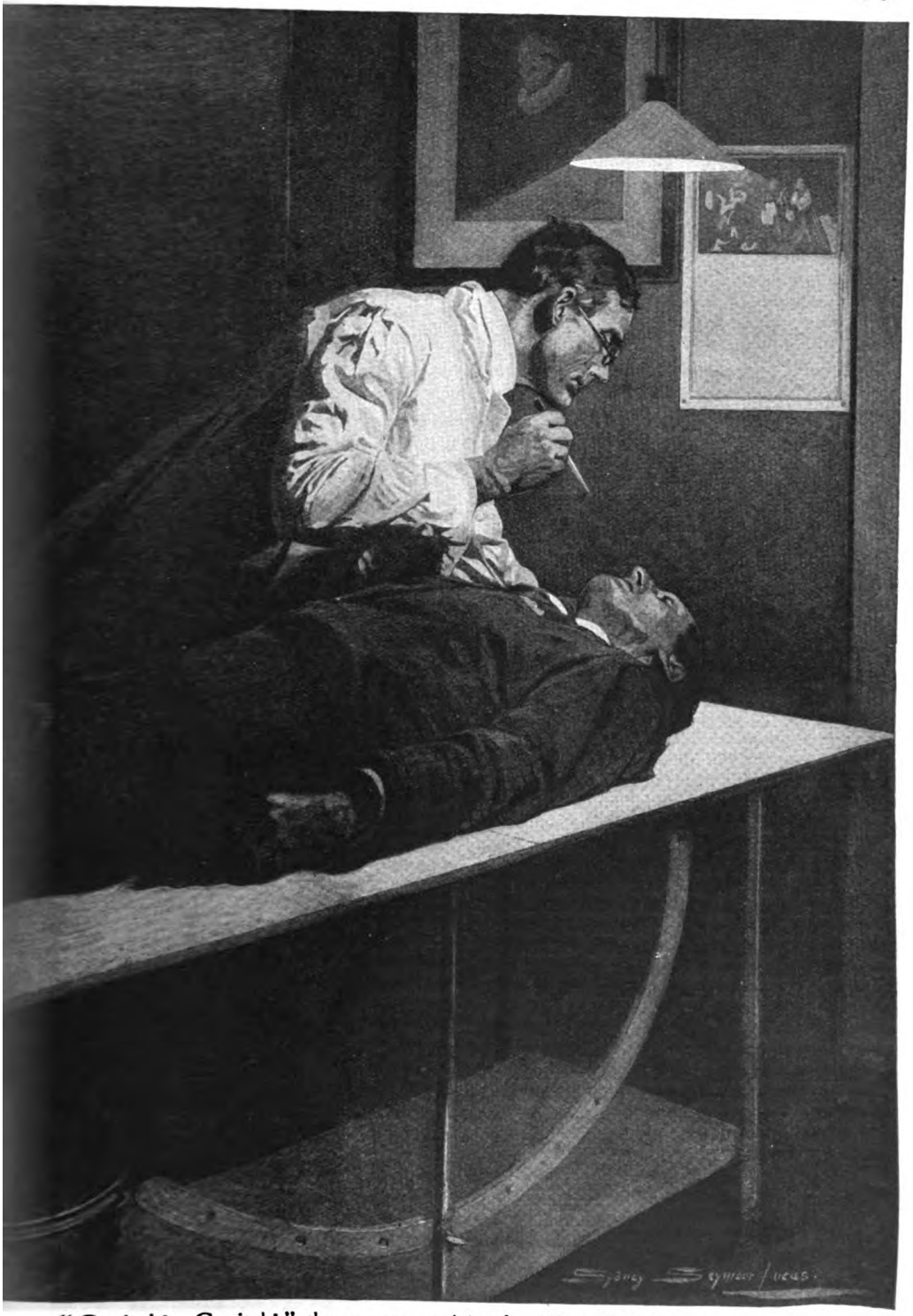
The policemen hurried off. Ann remained.

"Are you hurt?" she asked, quickly.

"Stupefied—with some drug," he explained. "The man is one of the worst types of madmen. What made you come?"

She smiled a little wanly.

"I felt that you were doing a foolish thing," she said. "I watched at the other end of



"Capital! Capital!" the surgeon exclaimed. "I really believe that you are the man I have been seeking for years."

the footpath. I saw you throw up your arms as though you had a fit, and disappear into this garden. I knew it was no use coming alone, so I rushed down to the police-station."

"You've saved my life," he muttered.

"You risked yours on my information," she reminded him.

"I never thought the fellow could be such a fiend. Listen!"

They heard the tramp of the police through the empty house, the opening and closing of doors, voices muttering, but the men came back unsuccessful. The two tragical figures—the great surgeon and his nurse—had passed out once more into the world of shadows.

ANN LANCASTER was again seated in the easy-chair drawn up to the side of Daniel Rocke's desk. She was in deep mourning; the secret of the rock garden had been blazoned out to a horrified world. Even a Press greedy for sensation had glossed over some of the details of that gruesome discovery, and the identity of the man and woman was as yet undiscovered.

"Still no news?" she asked.

"Nothing beyond the usual crop of absurd rumours," he grumbled. "I am in touch with a friend who will let me know directly there is a real discovery."

"I should have thought," she observed, "that the cleverest criminal in the world would have found it impossible to slip away from a place like Dredley and vanish, especially with a woman. That a lunatic should be able to do so, with the whole of the police force of England hot-foot after him, seems amazing."

"Londe is only a lunatic upon one point," Daniel reminded her. "He is obsessed with the idea of replacing a portion of his own brain with that of another man. Apart from that, I believe he is just as brilliant as ever. That's what makes him so horribly dangerous."

She shivered.

"And the woman?"

"She was his favourite nurse, and she went mad precisely when he did. Her madness to-day consists solely in believing that what he desires is possible."

"Is she really his wife?" Ann asked, curiously.

"They were discharged from the asylum within a week of one another," Daniel replied. "They met in London, and were married by special licence. It was understood that they were leaving at once for Australia."

"And somewhere or other," Ann went on, with a little shiver, "they are free. He is sharpening his knife for his next victim, and the lure in her eyes is there, waiting!"

"Are you going to keep your post at the Foreign Office?" Daniel asked, a little abruptly.

"I hope not," she answered. "Why?"

"I am commencing affairs on my own account," Daniel announced. "Will you accept a post with me?"

"What are your affairs?" she inquired.

"I have made a bungler's start," he admitted, "but there is a new department of Home Secret Service being established—the head of it is the friend I spoke of—and we are going to find Londe. I am also pledged to help him in any other of his cases where my assistance may be of service. Then, of course, there is my day by day work of decoding cipher-manuscripts. I do that for anyone who chooses to employ me. The Foreign Office still send me their work."

"I was getting fifty-five shillings," she confided. "I can live on that, but I should like sixty."

"There will be no difficulty about that," he assented. "You'll find the work tedious at times. You'll have to help with the decoding when there's nothing else doing."

"I don't mind that," she assured him. "There is just one thing which will reconcile me to any amount of drudgery."

He looked at her curiously. For all her charm, he realized that she was a very determined young woman.

"You know what it is," she continued, after a moment's pause. "Some day you may get on the track of that man, and there may be a chance of helping."

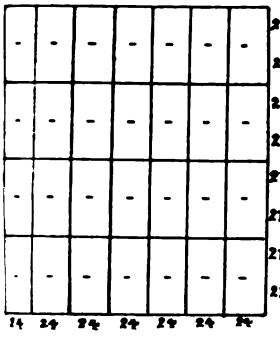
He nodded.

"I understand. Try and start here on Monday morning, please."

(*Next Month: "The Terror of Elton Lodge."*)

PERPLEXITIES. By Henry E. Dudeney.

645.—THE DOMINO RECTANGLE.



HERE is a new domino puzzle that I hope will be found entertaining. Arrange the twenty-eight dominoes exactly as shown in the illustration, where the pips are omitted, so that the pips in every one of the seven columns shall sum to 24 and those in every one of the eight rows to 21.

646.—PALINDROMIC SQUARE NUMBERS.

THIS is a curious subject for investigation—the search for square numbers the figures of which read backwards and forwards alike. Some of them are very easily found. For example, the squares of 1, 11, 111, and 1111 are respectively 1, 121, 12321, and 1234321, all palindromes, and the rule applies for any number of 1's provided the number does not contain more than nine. But there are other cases that we may call irregular, such as the square of 264=69696 and the square of 2285=5221225. Now, all the examples I have given contain an *odd* number of digits. Can the reader find a case where the square palindrome contains an *even* number of figures?

647.—MORE EXPANDING WORDS.

A NAVAL correspondent sends me this new example:—

Though . know .. is a ... being restricted to a special ...., th: ..... feeling (the ..... cause of which may have been my employment in a ..... factory) has gone. I feel sure, however, that the ..... of .... of food ..... a means for avoiding the ..... of one's health by dyspepsia.

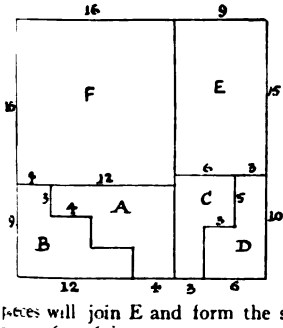
Each successive word contains an additional letter, though the order of the letters may, of course, be varied to any extent.

648.—THE PUZZLE OF THE RUNNERS.

TWO men ran a race round a circular course, going in opposite directions. Brown was the best runner and gave Tompkins a start of one-eighth of the distance. But Brown, with a contempt for his opponent, took things too easily at the beginning, and when he had run one-sixth of his distance he met Tompkins, and saw that his chance of winning the race was very small. How much faster than he went before must Brown now run in order to tie with his competitor? The puzzle is quite easy when once you have grasped its simple conditions.

SOLUTIONS TO LAST MONTH'S PUZZLES.

640.—THE SQUARE TABLE-TOP.



THE illustration shows the simplest, and I think the prettiest, solution in six pieces. Move piece A up a step on B and you have the original piece 12 × 12. Move C up a step on D and the two pieces will join E and form the square 15 × 15. The piece 16 × 16 is not cut.

641.—A COMPLETE SKELETON.

```
625)631938(1011·1008
    625
    ---
     693
     625
     ---
      688
      625
      ---
       630
       625
       ---
        5000
        5000
        ----
```

The three o's that must occur at the bottom show that the divisor is a multiple of 1000. The factors therefore can only be 5, 5, 5, 2, 2, 2, x, where x is less than 10. To form the three-figure divisor, one factor at least must be 5, and therefore the last figure must be 5 or 0. The subtraction from the single 0 near the bottom shows that it is a 5 and at once gives us the 5000. The factor 2 being excluded from the divisor (or it could not end in a 5), the final figure in the quotient must be 8 (2 × 2 × 2), and the divisor 625, making x a fourth 5. The rest is quite easy.

642.—A WORD SQUARE

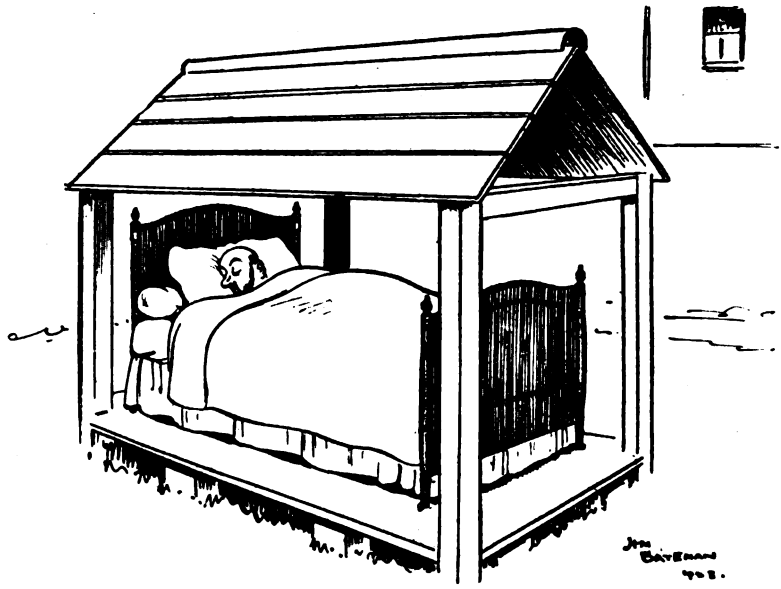
S I R E N
I M A G E
R A N G E
E G G E D
N E E D Y

643.—BAXTER'S DOG.

IT is obvious that Baxter will overtake Anderson in one hour, for each will be four miles from the hotel in the same direction. Then, as the dog has been running uniformly at ten miles an hour during that hour, he must have run ten miles! When my correspondent put this problem before a French professor of mathematics he exclaimed, "*Mon Dieu, quelle série!*" quite overlooking the simple manner of solution.

644.—WRONG TO RIGHT.

WRONG, PRONG, PRONE, CRONE, CRANE, CRATE, PRATE, PLATE, PLATS, PEATS, PEARS, PEERS, LEERS, LIERS, LIENS, LIONS, SION'S, SIGNS, SIGHS, SIGHT, RIGHT. Of course, LIERS are those who lie down. We may omit the apostrophe in SION'S ("Are there many Sions?"). This solution is due to Dr. J. B. H. A shorter solution I have not been able to discover.



Somebody told him that he could prolong his life by sleeping in his garden.

A LITTLE NOVEL OF HAMPSTEAD

BY

William Caine and H.M.Bateman

NOT very far from the Bull and Bush tavern there lived a middle-aged bearded little man called Andrew Watson, and somebody told him that he could prolong his life by sleeping in his garden. So Watson constructed (for he was handy with his hammer and saw) a roof on four uprights, and beneath this, on a platform, he placed his bed and passed the night in a manner which he believed to be conducive to longevity. In the morning his neighbour, a widow woman, a Mrs. Orchard, woke betimes, as was her habit, and, looking out upon that summer day, was put very nearly beside herself by the spectacle of this Watson in bed. For she had three unmarried daughters. As she stood frozen in her attitude, Watson emerged and, hurrying up the gravel path, disappeared within his own house. Now at last Mrs. Orchard understood the object of Watson's recent carpentering. Here, then, was matter for correspondence. Watson had not dried himself before his servant was knocking at his bathroom door with a note to which an instant reply was requested. Watson read, and: "Dash my buttons," he said, "this is not to be endured. Is she never to be done with her notes? There's no living beside the woman. I cannot touch my piano, I may not practise my voice-scales, I must not lunge against my fencing-pad, and now I am not to sleep where I please." He called for pen, ink, and paper and there, all unclothed as he was, he wrote against the wall his cartel of defiance, passed it out to his servant, and concluded the drying of his body, singing a voice-scale the while. "Very good," said Mrs. Orchard a few minutes later; "if he can do as he pleases in his own garden, so can I," and she gave orders for a wooden hoarding to be built alongside of her party garden-wall, a hoarding of such a height that, she calculated, the indelicate spectacle of a bedded Watson should be hidden from the eyes of her daughters, yea, though they should ascend to the topmost storey of the house.

This hoarding was not erected without the disbursement of money. Yet it was extravagantly ugly. When Watson saw what was going on in Mrs. Orchard's garden he took counsel with himself. "This erection," he said, "will impede the free play of the night breezes above

my face. The woman is as good as murdering me." And he sent for a small builder that he knew whose name was Jabber. No sooner, then, was Mrs. Orchard's hoarding well and truly built and all possibility of offence precluded, than lo! the shanty of Watson soared aloft upon poles above the level of the said hoarding, and Watson was skipping to bed up a ladder. To this manœuvre Mrs. Orchard, a determined woman, responded by increasing the height of her hoarding. Whereupon Watson strengthened his supports and shot up his alfresco chamber to the altitude necessary for obtaining the free play of the night breezes upon his face and beard, Jabber reaping the price of these additions.

Fresh and healthy should Watson's sleep have been, but there arose a night breeze of some violence, causing his pagoda to sway in a terrifying manner and blowing down his ladder, so that he passed the night wholly in supplication. And when the day broke and Mrs. Orchard looked out upon it, there was Watson's face, pale but resolute, above his counterpane, and Watson was calling loudly for his housekeeper to come and set up the ladder. Which was done. Then did Mrs. Orchard ascend into her daughters' bedroom and drive them back into bed and pull down the blind and go to law. She invoked the London Building Act and the Police (Town Clauses) Act, and all the other Acts in which she could find anything to help her, and summoned Watson to show cause why he should not be punished for erecting a dangerous structure and going to bed in his garden to the bodily and spiritual peril of herself and daughters. And Watson brought a cross action for the recovery of his light and air, and they both spent money like water, and all Hampstead was divided into two camps, and there were columns in the morning papers, and the affair was used in advertisements as thus :—

IF YOU WANT FRESH AIR AT NIGHT DON'T SLEEP IN THE TREES, BUT PUT IN ABSALOM'S PATENT SASH.

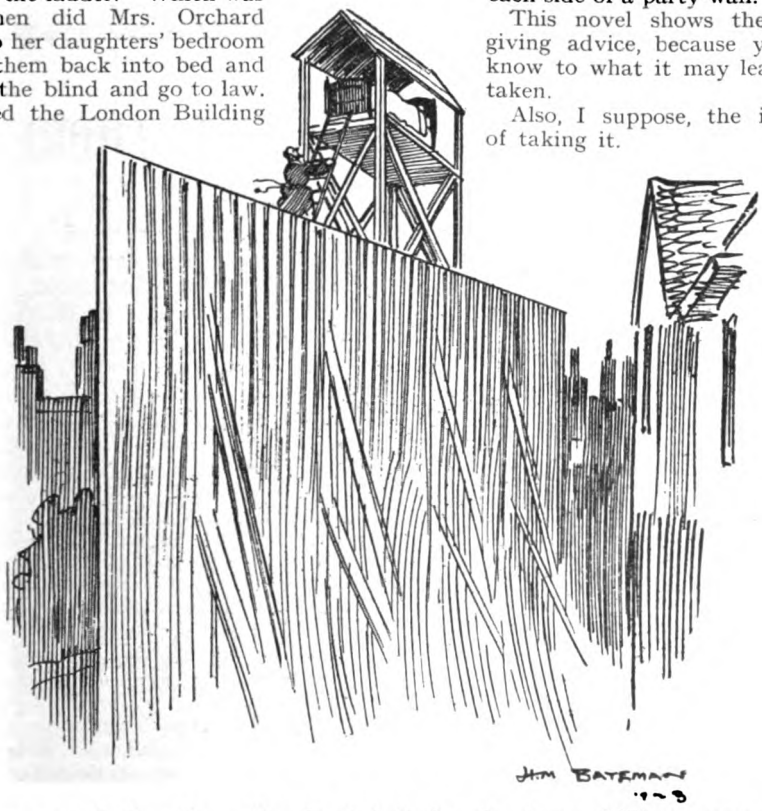
And thus :—

ARE YOU SHOCKED? USE MAKE-PEACE'S RUBBER HEELS.

And it was also in *Punch*. And I do not know what would have happened had not somebody told Watson that it was very dangerous to sleep in the garden. Then he had his bed taken indoors, and the trouble passed away with two little bonfires, one on each side of a party-wall.

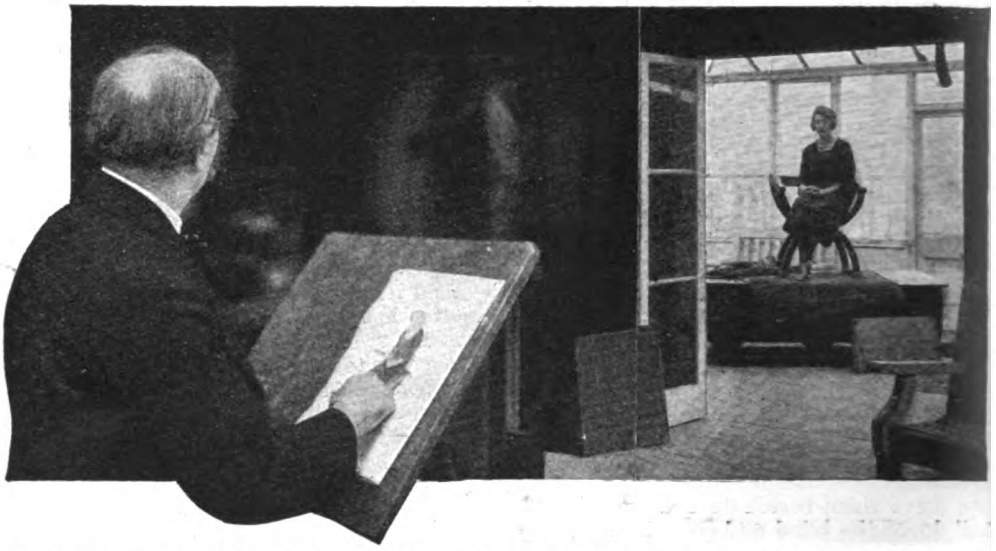
This novel shows the folly of giving advice, because you never know to what it may lead if it is taken.

Also, I suppose, the imbecility of taking it.



No sooner was the hoarding well and truly built than the shanty of Watson soared aloft upon poles above the level of the said hoarding.

A "STRAND" ILLUSTRATION IN THE MAKING



AN INTERVIEW WITH WILLIAM HATHERELL, R.I.

BY FENN SHERIE

When it was decided to request one of the many well-known illustrators whose work appears in the pages of THE STRAND MAGAZINE to allow readers the privilege of studying the methods by which an illustration is made, the choice fell almost immediately upon Mr. William Hatherell, R.I., probably the oldest and certainly the most eminent of modern illustrators, who has been engaged upon the pictures for Mr. H. de Vere Stacpoole's story "The Garden of God." Mr. Hatherell consented, and as the result of a series of visits to his studio with camera and notebook during the evolution of the excellent drawings which appear in this issue, the following article gives a clear insight into the ways and means of magazine picture-making.

IT is a fascinating experience to stand behind an artist whilst he is at work, to look over his shoulder and watch a drawing growing before your eyes, line by line and stroke by stroke, from the blank cardboard to the rough sketch, and from the rough sketch to the finished work of art. If you are interested in seeing how it is done, turn for a moment to page 431 and you will find an illustration to "The Garden of God," drawn by William Hatherell, R.I.

Having studied this, let your imagination carry you back to a large, well-lit studio in Brondesbury a few weeks ago, where, to employ an idiom of the drama, Mr. Hatherell was "discovered" sitting by the fireside carefully studying the author's manuscript prior to starting work upon the illustration in question.

"My first consideration in undertaking a drawing," he explained, "is to make sure that I have all the minor details of the subject to be illustrated clearly fixed in my mind. Not only have I to consider the age and type of each of the characters, the details of their

clothing, weapons, and other accessories to the picture, but I have also to think of the time of the day in which the incident is supposed to occur, whether the scene takes place by moonlight or daylight, whether the sun is described as shining brightly or hidden behind a cloud, and so on. In almost every story there are a hundred and one little points of detail created by the vivid imagination of the author, and the artist who fails to notice them all may look forward to a shower of correspondence from readers—kindly or sarcastic, according to their moods—pointing out the error. We will talk about that more fully later on—meanwhile, let us get to work."

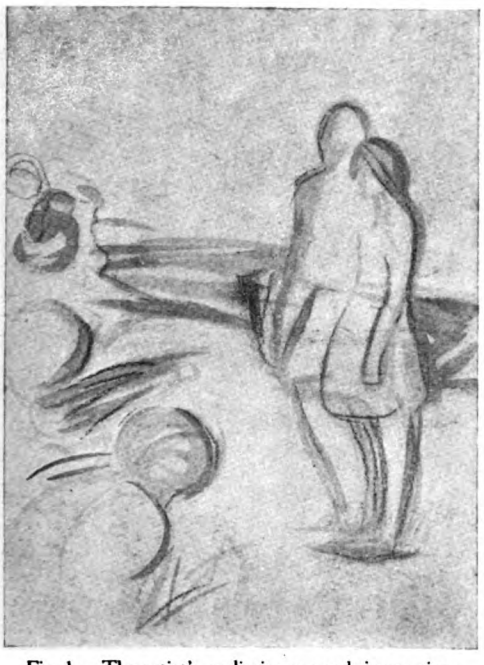


Fig. 1.—The artist's preliminary rough impression. Five minutes' rapid sketching with brush and chalk serves to map out the composition of the picture.

Mr. Hatherell attached a sheet of cardboard to his easel and began to sketch. A touch of pencil-work here, a stroke of the brush there, and within five minutes he had produced a rough sketch (Fig. 1).

"That is how I visualize the composition of the picture," he said. "It is only a rough impression, but it serves to give the correct 'balance,' which, as every art student knows, is most essential. Without good composition one may produce an illustration of sorts, but certainly not a picture. To make a subject picturesque is always my first

Fig. 2.—The second stage of the illustration. As the result of further work with the brush the "colour" scheme—*i.e.*, the light and shade—of the picture is crudely suggested.

Fig. 3.—After working from the models. Delicate pencil work has built up the details of the figures, and the ragged lines are being eliminated. The finished drawing appears on page 431.

Rough notes with black and white chalk on brown paper, made in order to obtain the correct lighting effects for the moonlight scene reproduced below.

aim—and there is no subject that cannot be treated in this way, provided the artist has a little imagination and a sense of balance."

Whilst Mr. Hatherell proceeded to build up his picture, I asked what he considered to be the most interesting work he had ever undertaken.

"That is difficult to answer," he said. "Roughly speaking, my work may be divided into three different kinds—'black and white' illustrations, news drawings for the *Graphic*, and paintings for the Academy and the Royal Institute. If you refer to the illustrations of fiction, I think, perhaps, the most enjoyable task I have ever undertaken was a set of drawings for *Harper's Magazine* to illustrate 'Jude the Obscure,' by Thomas Hardy. On this occasion I had the rare honour of meeting the author personally. Of course, it was some time ago, but I remember that I was particularly impressed by his pleasant, modest manner, and I am sure that the success of the illustrations was largely due to the keen personal interest Thomas Hardy took in them. Not only did he help me to understand his conception of the various characters, but he let me into the secret of the settings of the various scenes. Thus I was able to make sketches of the actual spots of the picturesque Wessex countryside in which the incidents of the story were supposed to have occurred. I am glad to say that he was delighted with the result, and one of his letters expressing appreciation of my share of the work is still among my most treasured possessions."

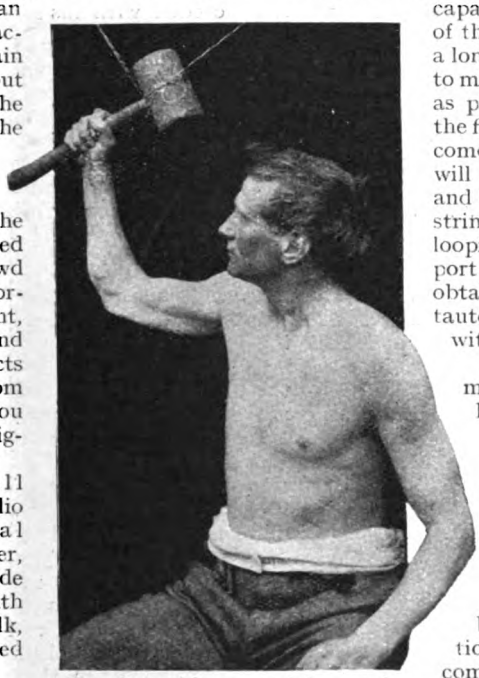
Like most illustrators, Mr. Hatherell prefers to work upon a drawing for an hour or two at a time and then to lay it aside for a while. So, when he had reached the second progressive stage (Fig. 2), he left his easel and showed me round the studio.

A small reproduction of the drawing for "The Garden of God" which appeared in our March issue, and for which the above studies were made.

"I shall not proceed any farther with the drawing until I am able to sketch from models," he explained. "From my earliest days I have always employed models for my work. In my opinion, however good one's imagination may be, there are certain little details of lighting, folds of drapery, and so on, which can only be obtained by this means. In fact, I will go so far as to say that in the drawing of an undraped figure it is practically impossible to obtain accurate results without employing a model, for the light and shade of the muscles and the form generally will differ with the slightest change of position. In the March STRAND I illustrated an incident in which a crowd of natives were rushing forward in the moonlight, brandishing spears and clubs. The lighting effects were carefully studied from a model. Perhaps you would like to see my original sketches for this?"

Here Mr. Hatherell searched in his portfolio and produced several sheets of brown paper, upon which he had made some rough sketches with black and white chalk, which are reproduced on the previous page.

"These are the studies for the drawing to which I refer," he continued. "I posed the model in a number of different positions, with the light behind him, and made these rough sketches before working on the finished drawing. I use chalk for rapid sketching of this description because it is the simplest medium—one cannot work so quickly with 'lamp-black' and 'process white,' because water-colour takes a certain amount of time to dry. You will notice, by the way, that I sketched the model exactly as I saw him, altering his features in the finished drawing to the Polynesian type. There was a time when I employed a native for a model when undertaking this style of work, but in this instance a white man served my purpose. You will see that there are sketches of several different positions, and in some cases I have concentrated entirely upon getting the correct lighting on one portion of the anatomy alone—the arm, for example. Very often I am able to allow the model to relax the original pose whilst I make a separate study of a hand or arm. I will show you what I mean."



How the model was posed for a study of the arm muscles of a native brandishing a club. The mallet, which served the necessary purpose, was supported by string in order to enable him to maintain the position without undue strain.

Mr. Hatherell here introduced the professional model who had "sat" for these studies and requested him to take up a position representing one of the natives brandishing a club.

"Now, although an experienced model is capable of sustaining a pose of this description for quite a long time, it is always best to make him as comfortable as possible. We will take the first suitable article that comes to hand—this mallet will do—to serve as a club, and by attaching a piece of string to the doorpost and looping it he is given a support which enables him to obtain a firm grip and thus tauten the arm muscles without undue strain."

A snapshot of the model in this pose is here reproduced.

"In drawing the principal characters of a story," Mr. Hatherell continued, "I endeavour to select the models typically suited to sit for them, because the illustrations I make generally come very near to being portraits of the models themselves. Perhaps you will have recognized already that the model who is sitting for me now is also the man I used for the character of Jim Kearney."

In order to emphasize the likeness, the model kindly consented to pose before the camera in an attitude characteristic of Mr. Stacpoole's sailor. A comparison of the photograph on top of the next page with the drawing which appeared on page five in our January issue will be of interest to those who possess a copy. In any case, those who have studied the illustrations to previous instalments of "The Garden of God" will readily recognize that this might be an actual portrait of Jim Kearney in the flesh.

When next Mr. Hatherell was visited he had made further progress with the drawing, working from the models. The vague shapes of the preliminary sketch had now begun to assume definite forms, and as a result of some highly delicate work

with the pencil, the features of Dick, the girl, and the native women on the left of the picture were now perfectly modelled (Fig. 3).

"I have already mentioned that I do not always work on to the cardboard direct from the model," he explained. "In the case of this study of Dick, for example, I first showed the young man my rough sketch to give him an idea how I wanted him to pose, and he assumed a position as near as possible to the one suggested. It so happened, as is often the case, that he assumed a pose which was actually a slight improvement on my original, and I have made an alteration accordingly. I think you will agree that the turning of his head is an improvement. Also you will see that I have raised his right arm so that he is shouldering the club. This is done to avoid the rather straight effect of the arm hanging loosely by his side, almost exactly parallel to the girl's left arm. I have also worked from the model for the figures of the native women in the foreground. The two women on the left of the picture still have distinctly European faces, but they will soon be altered in the finished drawing.

"I am just about to start work upon the study of an arm for the figure in the right-hand bottom corner of the picture. Perhaps you would like to watch me?"

The invitation was readily accepted, and Mr. Hatherell called in the services of a lady model. To support her arm in the required pose with the minimum of discomfort a loop of string was again employed. It was interesting to note the remarkable ease and natural grace with which the lady took up her position.

"Some people seem to think that an artist's model has a very easy time," said Mr. Hatherell as he proceeded with his sketching. "Perhaps they are misled by the novelettes or cinematograph pictures dealing with studio life, in which artists who wear velvet coats and flowing ties take their models out in the evenings to champagne suppers. Artists who really earn their living by their work have no time for frivolities; and, taking them all round, artists' models are the most hard-working people you could possibly wish to meet. To maintain a difficult pose for half an hour or more involves considerable physical strain. Even the pose which this lady is holding now would tire the average person in about five minutes, despite the fact that the arm is supported. Try it for yourself, and you will soon realize that to be an artist's model is no sinecure."

The model who posed for the character of Jim Kearney in Mr. H. de Vere Stacpoole's "Garden of God," photographed in a characteristic attitude.

Mr. Hatherell making a rough sketch of an arm for the figure in the lower right-hand corner of the drawing on page 431.

The sketch was finished, the model retired, and Mr. Hatherell returned to his easel to continue work upon the drawing.

"In the final stages of a drawing," he proceeded, "I have to pay special attention to detail—not only in the technical sense, but in the matter of scenery, costumes, native weapons, and so on. I have a fairly good reference library from which to obtain the necessary information, as well as an enormous store of sketches which I made

at first hand when travelling abroad many years ago. The actual scenery for Mr. Stacpoole's story is imaginary, although, of course, it has to be typical of the South Sea Islands. If necessary, a glance at one or two photographs of that part of the world will be sufficient to enable me to visualize a suitable setting for a picture. Costumes, such as they are in this particular story, are studied partly from books of reference and partly from the specimens in the British Museum. There are many little details which, though unimportant in themselves, all help to lend a touch of realism to the picture. For instance, I happen to know that the Polynesian women are very fond of entwining flowers in their hair, and I have introduced this into the drawing in hand. You have no idea how necessary it is to study every little detail of an illustration. As I have said before, the artist who makes even a slight error is almost certain to receive a shoal of letters from readers—that is, of course, if the vigilant eye of the Art Editor has not already 'spotted' the mistake before publication.

"I remember, during the war, the great care that had to be taken to get every item of a soldier's kit correct. One artist of my acquaintance, who did a battle picture, took infinite pains to ensure that every strap and buckle of the soldiers' equipment should be correctly drawn, and when the drawing was finished he even went to the trouble of showing it to a military man, who confessed that he was unable to find fault with it. Yet a few days after the drawing was published my friend received several letters pointing out that one of the men in the picture was wearing his box respirator the wrong way round, so that the flap opened towards him instead of away from him. That, of course, is merely by the way, but it shows you how careful an artist has to be."

Whilst he was speaking Mr. Hatherell added the finishing touches to his drawing. A stroke here and there with a piece of plastic rubber, squeezed out to a fine point, emphasized the high lights. The deft application of lamp-black strengthened the shadows. A few touches of "process white" added "body" to the picture, until all the ragged lines of the original rough sketch had disappeared. Finally the artist's signature was added and the task was completed. The finished drawing appears in its proper place as an illustration to "The Garden of God" on page 431.

Every illustrator has a different method of working, but it must be admitted that the gradual evolution of such a genuinely artistic production from the seeming chaos of the preliminary rough sketch results in a certain freedom and "looseness" of treatment—revealing none of the harshness of the semi-photographic style, and, at the same time, devoid of any note of bizarre "impressionism"—which fully compensates for the extra work involved.

Mr. Hatherell from the model's point of view. A study of the artist at work, taken from the throne on which the models are posed.

Mr. Hatherell is an extremely modest man who shuns the limelight, and he was particularly anxious that the writer, in recording the interview, should not make him appear dogmatic. When it was pointed out to him that his record of forty-five years of consistently good work proclaimed him as a past-master in the art of illustrating, and therefore one whose opinion should be valued, he smiled affably and replied: "I am very fond of my work, and I have always done my best—that is all. But please keep me in the background as much as possible, and whatever you say please don't describe me as a 'veteran.'"

The Garden of God

A SEQUEL TO "THE BLUE LAGOON"

By

H. de VERE STACPOOLE

XXXII.

ILLUSTRATED BY W. HATHERELL, R.I.

IF the blue parua birds nesting above the house were indeed the birds of long ago, they might have fancied nothing changed since those days when the father of Dick returned from the valley of the idol with Emmeline. Love never alters, and the forms of the lovers were almost the same, the incidents of their simple and humble lives made beautiful by the absolute innocence which is Nature.

The joyous awakenings to mornings of new life, the sudden and passionate embraces, the sudden and seeming forgetfulness of one another, as when the figure of Dick could be seen far away on the reef, heedless of everything but the fish he was hunting, followed by the figure of Katafa, faithful as his shadow.

All was the same and yet, touched by the wizard spell of Karolin beyond the southern sea, all was vaguely different. The spell of Karolin had seized Dick through Katafa—though he had never seen the reef and the gulls and the forty-mile sweep of lagoon, the great atoll island had begun its work upon him even before Kearney had died. It had made him talk its language, it had made him forget his past, little by little and strand by strand it had broken him away from all things connecting him with the world, drifting him farther than his parents had ever drifted from civilization and its fantastic labours, its hopes, dreams, and ambitions.

And this it had done through Katafa.

He was no longer Dick, but Taori; the language of his early childhood had gone from him like a bird flown; Kearney was the recollection of something that had once been part of a dream, Nan on his pole by the house was far more potent and living.

At night, sometimes, Katafa, as they sat under the stars, would talk to him in an extraordinary way. It was as though Karolin were speaking and trying to tell of itself. Karolin had never released its hold on her, and in some strange manner the coming of love, the breaking of the spell of Taminan, the new meaning of life, all revived in her mind the memory of the environment of her childhood. She told him of Le Juan, the priestess, and of Nanawa and of Uta Matu, the king, so old that his skin was beginning to scale off in white scales like the scales of the alomba. She told him that at Karolin there was nothing but reef—no island, nothing but reef. Dick laughed at this, a short, hard laugh that struck through the starlight like the cough of a stabbing spear. She took his hand as they lay there side by side, and as if to lead his imagination.

At Karolin there was nothing but reef, a reef so great that sight could not follow it, on one side the lagoon (the quiet water) and on the other the sea. Were you to follow it on foot you would walk for days before it led you round back to the break. Two days' journey it was, and you had to sleep at night without a roof under the stars. The lagoon was so wide that it held all the stars, even the Milky Way (the great smoke), and the moon travelling all night could not cross it.

Then, in a voice more remote and as if telling a secret: "There are no trees there, only the palms."

It was Karolin speaking, not Katafa, Karolin the treeless, Karolin that had become part of her through the magic of environment. If the great sea spaces, the forty-mile reef, the lagoon mirror, and the snow of surf had found voices to

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tell of themselves, could they have spoken more clearly than they spoke through her ?

Her antagonism to the trees, felt when she first viewed them in their great masses, had become increased by the part they had played in trapping her, yet at base it was the antagonism of Karolin expressed by the human mind.

In all these talks there was no word of herself or the spell that had been put upon her by Le Juan. She herself scarcely knew the meaning of it, or why for years she had lived in the world as a shadow amongst shadows, or how it was that she had awakened to this new world in the arms of Dick. Yet deep in her heart a light had pierced, showing something vague and monstrous, something nameless that named itself Le Juan.

And now, as though Karolin had placed its finger upon the very woods themselves and upon the trees it hated because it had no trees, sometimes, when the wind was in a certain quarter, the dead men from Karolin would hint of their presence vaguely and dreadfully, driving Dick and Katafa to the reef to escape them.

The rigor had long since lost its grip and the fantastic show had collapsed, figures falling apart and in pieces, like waxworks melted by heat, in the furious corruption of the tropics. Then, in a little while, the woods were sweet again, but the stain remained in memory.

Dick had never loved the woods, his passion was all for the sea and the reef; and the stories of the girl about Karolin, whilst only half believed in, had left their mark on his mind. She had never indicated where the island lay, only conveying to him that somewhere there was a place where she had come from where nothing existed but sea and reef and lagoon; it was just a story, yet it dwelt with him, and, working in the inner recesses of his mind, it joined itself with vague recollections of what Kearney had said about the place where she had come from. Kearney had shown him one day the stain on the southern horizon, telling him that another island lay there and that the girl had come from it in all likelihood.

The thing had passed almost out of recollection.

ONE morning, a month or so after the woods had regained their sweetness, Dick, who had completed the sail for the dinghy, was standing by the little boat as she lay moored to the bank, when suddenly a whole lot of things grouped themselves together in his mind—the dinghy, the mast and sail, the open sea, recollections of Katafa's stories about the great reef and the lagoon where fish made thunder.

Katafa was in the boat ready to push off, but instead of joining her he beckoned her on shore again and, saying "Come," led the way off towards the trees. She followed him through the woods and up to the hill-top. There, on the southernmost side of the great rock, he stood and pointed south across the morning sea. She gazed and saw nothing.

"I see nothing, Taori, but the water and the wind on the water, and the sea birds on the wind—— Ah! There!"

Her eyes had caught the stain.

Out on the fishing bank long ago she had seen the full blaze of the lagoon striking upwards to the sky, making a vague pale window in the blue; this was the same, though remote.

"Karolin!" said Dick.

She stood, the wind lifting her hair and her eyes fixed on the stain, which grew and spread in her imagination till the song of the reef came round her and the freedom of the infinite spaces of sea and sky. All she longed for lay there, and all she loved stood beside her. She said nothing. Never once in her talk of her old home had she expressed the wish to go back; the place where she had found Dick was antagonistic to her, yet it was the place where she had found him, and was in some way part of him, and she could not put her dislike of it in speech, nor her desire to leave it. Even now she said nothing.

She did not know that the craving for adventure, for movement, for change, and the desire for newness was stirring in Dick's heart. He scarcely knew it himself. The thing that had come in his mind was scarcely formed as yet, or, being formed, had not yet developed its wings.

They left the hill-top and came down through the trees, scarcely speaking. One might have thought that they had quarrelled but for the fact that his arm was about her neck.

Before leaving the hill-top, had they turned their eyes to the north they might have seen across the blue morning sea a vision that seemed cast on the screen of things by the gods in opposition to the far, faint vision of Karolin.

There on the northern horizon, white as the wing of a gull, stood a sail, remote, lonely, only visible from this height—the sail of the first copra trader in these waters.

XXXIII.

WHEN the *Portsoy* had turned her stern to the reef long ago, she had done more than fire the shot that smashed the canoe of Katafa. She had logged the position of Palm Tree, and her captain in his drunken brain had logged the fact that it was "full of copra." He was no trader, but he drank where traders were, and in Pacific bar-rooms in a blue haze of smoke the fact made itself known after a time. That is how islands were discovered in the old days that are not so very old, through chance and schooner captains and the dingy pages of logs; through memories and conversations and the haze of bar-rooms the islands

unknown came into the world of the known, and not only the islands but their qualities.

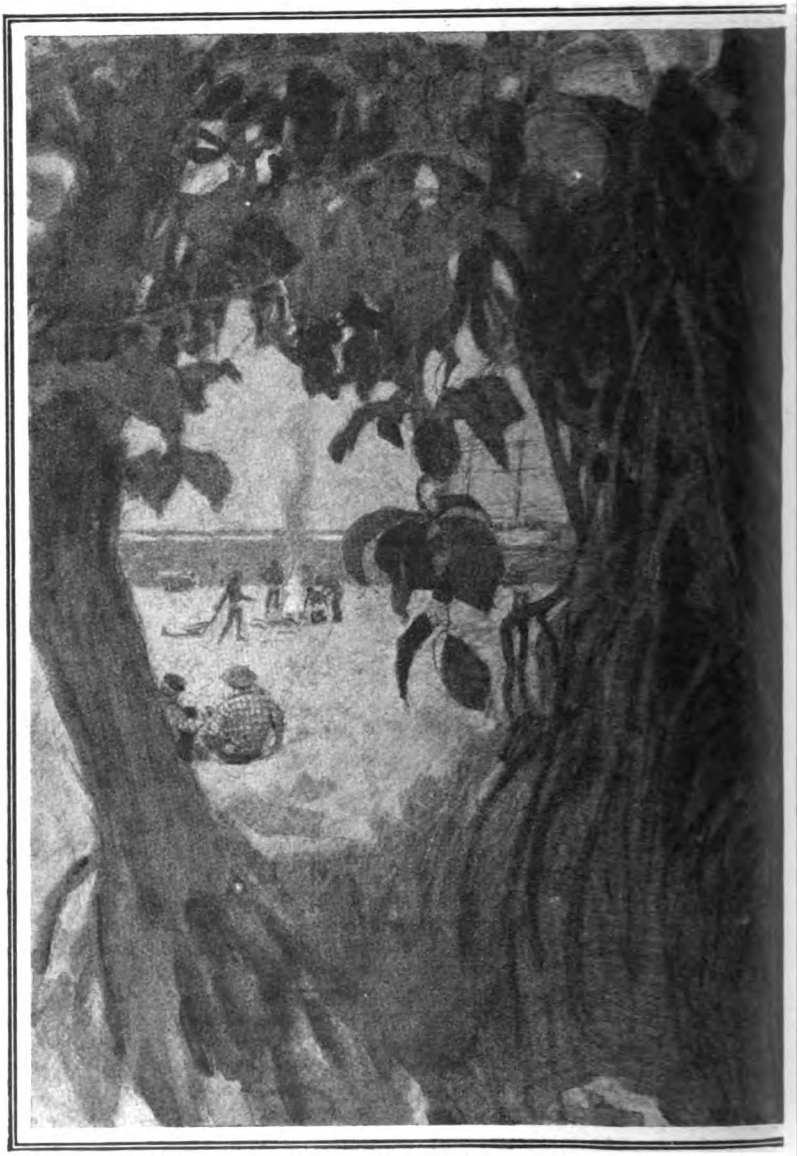
For years Nauru in its desolate beauty laughed at the sun till chance betrayed it and the phosphates that lay beneath its surface, and for years the Garden of God might have remained unknown but for what its palm trees had said to the *Portsoy* and the fact that copra had taken the place of sandalwood in the world of trade.

It was from Papeete that the *Morning Light* set out, a topsail schooner of a hundred and fifty tons, with enough native labour to work the island if found. Owing to a slight error in the *Portsoy's* reckoning she nearly missed it, and was about to give up the hunt when one morning, just as the sun broke above the sea-line, it showed far to the south, just a point on the new-born blue of the sky.

For an hour and more the favourable wind held strong and the island grew apace, then the wind failed and faded as if in regret at the ruin it was helping in, the ruin of Nature by trade. All day long the *Morning Light* held south under the play of light and variable winds, making the lagoon only at dusk and entering with the first of the stars.

Dick had put out the cooking fire; it was after supper, and they were talking of the day's work. Over on the southern bank at certain times of the tide the fishing was better than anywhere else in the lagoon,* the water was deep there, and you could reach the place either by striking across through the woods or going round the lagoon in the dinghy. The latter was the longer way, but they generally used it for the convenience of the boat in bringing back the fish. They had seen nothing of the *Morning Light*, nor had they exchanged a word about Karolin.

Night was the time for talking, as a rule, unless the business of the day had tired them out, as it had this evening. Dick, having put out the fire, turned on his side and was just



A fire was burning on the beach, around which half-a-dozen men were seated

* See "The Blue Lagoon."

about to speak to Katafa when through the woods, from the direction of the eastern beach, came a sound, a long low rumble, suddenly beginning and suddenly ceasing, the sound of the anchor chain of the *Morning Light* running out.

Instantly he was on his feet.

Every sound of the island was known to him; this was something new—new as the voice of the conch that had roused him from sleep to face Laminai and his tribe.

"Did you hear?" said Dick.

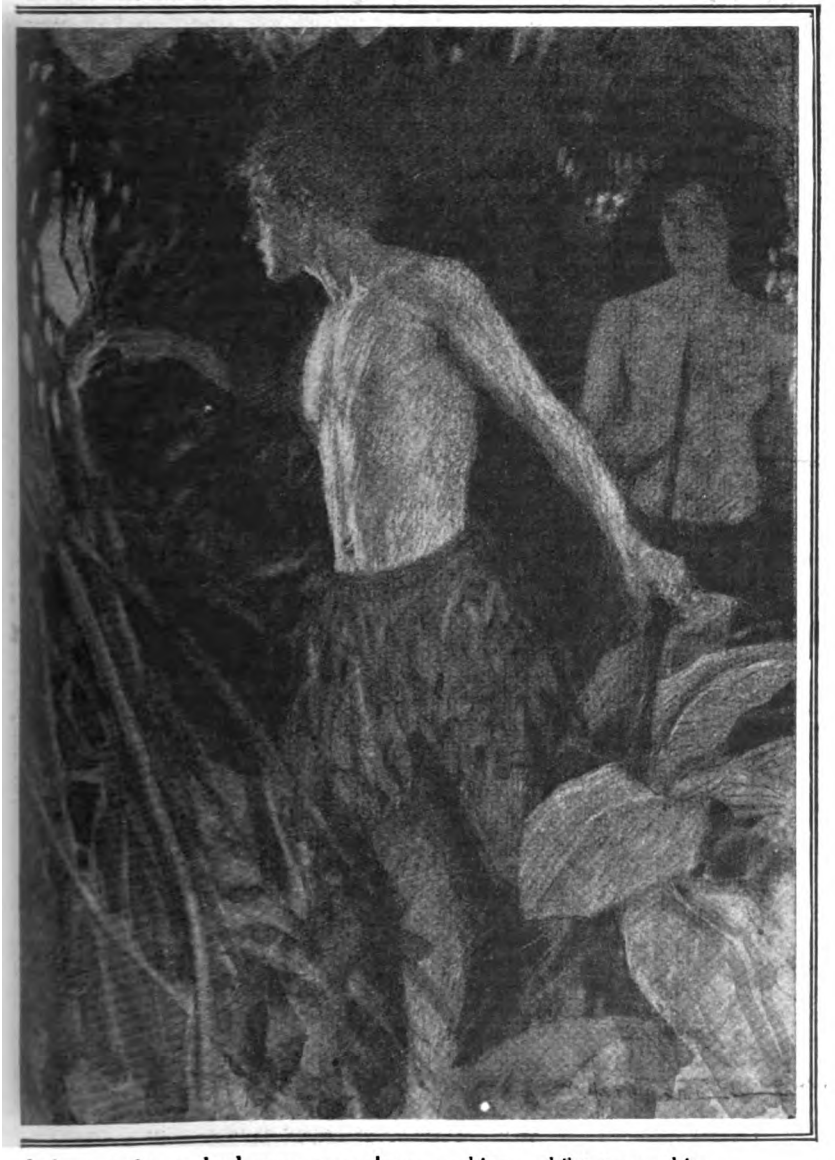
"Yes," said Katafa, "I heard." She was standing close to him, her head thrown back, listening.

The moon in its first quarter had risen above the trees and a wan rosy light fell on Dick, on Katafa, on the house beside which Nan leaned on his pole and within which could be dimly discovered the outline of the little ships.

Dick, as though fearful of listeners, raised his finger and then motioned to Katafa to follow him, leading the way towards the trees on the opposite side. He had not gone a dozen paces when, remembering his spear, he turned back for it and then, resuming the lead, plunged amongst the trees, keeping along the lagoon bank, the glitter of the water showing through the branches and the green glow of the forest lighting them as they walked in single file, and silent as Indians on the war-path in a hostile country.

As they drew close to the eastern beach, a red spark of light showed through the leaves ahead. A fire was burning on the beach, and as Dick parted the last branches and stood, Katafa beside him, the fire blazed up till the trunks of the cocoa palms took the light.

A boat was beached near the fire, around which half-a-dozen dark, nearly naked men were busy cooking, whilst two white men, dressed as Kearney had been dressed, were seated on the sands, knees up and with a bottle before them. Some drinking nuts lay close to the man on the left.



dark, nearly naked men were busy cooking, whilst two white on the sands.

Away out on the lagoon the *Morning Light* lay at her moorings, the ebb showing a silver streak where the chain met it and where it passed away astern.

Katafa drew closer and drew her arm round Dick.

The dark, naked men swarming about the cooking fire fascinated her. Never had she seen such faces. The people of Karolin, owing to a Melanesian taint, were fierce enough, and some of them were plain enough, but the ugliest man of Karolin would have been handsome compared with any of these. Recruited from the New Hebrides and beyond, naked but for a Gee string, with slit ear-lobes and nose-rings all complete, they seemed less like men than apes, less like apes than devils.

Sometimes one of the two seated men would cry out a harsh order or rise to boot one of the ape men, and now, as Katafa watched, something broke the lagoon near the schooner—another boat, a boat laden with stores, tent poles, canvas, crawling slowly across the lagoon to beach where the zone of firelight met the ripples of the outgoing tide.

Dick drew Katafa away, the branches closed, and, turning, they made their way back through the clear, clean night of the woods, the green gloom of the thickets, the glades where the young moon lit the ferns.

WHAT had happened to the island, to the night, to the very trees, to life itself? How and in what way did they sense the fact that what they had seen was bad, they who knew not even the name of evil, and how and in what way did they know that what had come had come to stay? That something had broken in on them, incomprehensible but loathsome, that the island would never be the same again?

Not a word did they speak the whole way back to the house, Dick leading, Katafa following. The most extraordinary thing in their strange life, alone and cut off from the world, was the fact that, though they spoke little to each other with their tongues, they were always conversing together—a movement, a look, a touch, a change of expression could convey what would have taken a dozen words to convey, and above and beyond that they had a mind relationship perhaps purely psychic. They could think together. Often some wish or want of Dick would be understood by Katafa, and before he could stretch out his hand for something it would be handed to him. Or a wish of Katafa's would become known to Dick without a word conveying it.

Arrived at the house, they consulted together for a moment.

"From where have they come?" asked Katafa, as though Dick could know.

He shook his head. Then, standing, his eyes fixed on the house and his brow wrinkled, he came to a sudden decision. Everything must be hidden, even the dinghy; they must take to the trees; and before he had finished speaking, Katafa, who knew his mind, turned to the house whilst he ran down to the lagoon bank where the dinghy was moored, saw that the mast and sail were in her, and that the fishing gear was safe in the locker. There were three fish spears in the boat; he let them lie. Then, running back to the house, he helped in the removal of the things.

The dinghy of the *Raratonga* was an outsized boat of her type, carvel built, broad of beam, and with plenty of space for their wants. They brought nearly everything down, Nan and the little ships, which they placed in the bow, the two mats on which they slept, the axe and saw, a knife, and a huge bunch of bananas that Dick had cut two days before. Everything they treasured they took away, leaving everything else, the plates, the cooking utensils, and all the stuff in the shack behind the house. Then, when they had finished, they got in, and Dick, taking the sculls, brought the boat to the cape where the wild coco-nut and arita bushes spread out over the water; then, taking in the sculls and seizing the branches, he dragged the boat in, far in, till the branches and bushes covered her entirely, and tied up to a root. Then, avoiding the house, they made their bed amidst the trees where Katafa had slept once. Neither of them spoke of the thing that had been in the depths of their minds since, standing on the hill-top, Dick had pointed to the stain on the southern sky—Karolin.

The call that had come to them had remained unspoken of; mysterious as the call of the south to the northern swallow, the call of the great lagoon island would have fetched them at last as the suck of the whirlpool fetches flotsam remote from it and seemingly beyond attraction, but the scene on the eastern beach to-night had brought them leagues closer to their goal. The instinct to seek Karolin had been joined to the desire for flight, the *Morning Light* and her crew had acted as the touch of cold that intensifies the swallows' vision of the palm trees and the south. It was only when, the dinghy loaded and securely hidden, they laid themselves down in the nest of fern that Dick spoke.

"If they stay," said Dick, "we will go there."

"Karolin?" said Katafa. "But if the big canoe is not gone, how can we pass it?"

"We will pass it," said Dick.

He had brought some bananas from the dinghy for their supper; he divided them, and as they ate he sketched the plan that had formulated itself in his mind.

If the new people left to-morrow, it would make no difference; they would start for Karolin. If the new people remained it would make no difference; they would start all the

same, with the slack of the tide to-morrow night, late. When the new-comers were asleep, they would put down the lagoon and make past the big canoe for the break; the big canoe would not stop them.

He spoke with the assurance of daring and power, but quietly, as though he were speaking of some ordinary matter.

They would sail for the south, "é Haya." The wind from the north, that had been dying and waking again all day, was blowing strong again; it would last like that for days. It was the prevailing wind of the year, and the moon was a fair-weather moon.

Then he went calmly asleep with Katafa's arm across him, but she could not sleep.

She was already in her imagination on her way to her old home. The men of Karolin were all dead, their bones were whitening in the trees up there, there was nothing to fear. Only the women and children were left, and Uta Matu, the old king, worn out and approaching his end.

With her woman's imagination she saw Dick, the man she loved and gloried in, standing on the beach of Karolin, king and ruler. Perhaps it was a prevision of this and the whitening bones of the men of Karolin that had made Le Juan years ago urge Uta Matu to destroy Katafa, and, failing, made her segregate the girl under the taboo of Taminan. Who knows?

XXXIV.

ON the morning when Laminai and all his host set out, never to return, Uta Matu, sitting where his women had placed him on the sand of the beach, watched the canoes depart. He saw the paddles flashing and the sheeting foam of the outriggers, he watched the mat sails take the wind; gulls followed the canoes, escorting them, wheeling, sweeping, and clanging on the wind. Then the gulls passed away and the sails vanished beyond the reef, and Uta found himself alone.

Alone with the women and the children and the crabs of the beach, he who had always led the fight and directed the rowers and dispensed the laws of Karolin for sixty long years. Alone and useless as the smallest child. Uta had been a hard and stern ruler, merciless to enemies, yet just according to his lights; he had known three gods—himself, Nanawa the shark-toothed one, and Nan of the coco-nuts.

He had only worshipped the first.

Just as a clever man believes in ghosts without letting the belief interfere in the least with his renting a house supposed to be haunted, Uta believed in his co-gods without letting his belief worry him much. Even if the verdict of Le Juan had been against the expedition, it is highly probable that he would have sent it off all the same; his fighting instincts had been raised and the death of his grandson, Sru, had vexed his soul. Having sat for awhile contemplating the ripples breaking on the sand and the gulls fighting above the water, the king of Karolin called to his women to carry him back to his house.

That night the great hot wind from the south blew, and whilst Laminai and his men were slaughtering each other and the waves were roaring on the reef of Karolin, Le Juan, full of kava and the fear that Nanawa had taken it into his head to play them some dirty trick instead of running straight, was clinging to a tree before the house of the king, shouting that Karolin was triumphant and her enemies slain, that Nanawa was riding the great south wind hastening to fight with the men of Karolin.

Then came the peaceful morning, and after that came the next day, and the next, and a week passed, and a fortnight, and still the men of Karolin did not return, and still another fortnight.

Uta would cause himself to be carried on his litter down to the canoe-houses, and there, resting and reviewing things, he would gaze into the great half-lit interiors of the houses where the long canoes had once rested. He could see the ridge-poles and the thatch of the roofs, the rollers and the tackle that had once held the canoes. The great hot wind, broken by a coco-nut grove, had left the houses almost undamaged, but the canoes—where were they? "Of what use are the houses without the canoes?" Uta would say to himself, "or of what use is life without the men who made the life of Karolin?—and my son Laminai and my grandson, where are they?"

He ordered three women to take a fishing canoe and start for the north, find Palm Tree, and see what they could see, but never to come back unless they brought news of the missing ones, and the three women he chose were the wives of Talia, Manua, and Leopa, the three men who had been with Sru and who had brought the news of his death to Karolin.

The three wretched women started with food enough for four days, and they never came back. Uta lost touch with life; for days he would neither speak nor eat; then, one morning, he called for Le Juan and she came, her knees knocking together.

"Well," said Uta, in a voice suddenly grown strong again, "what have you done with my men? What have you done with Laminai, my son, with his son and the men who went with him? Speak!"

The wretched creature stood without a word. She had been honest, born of a priestess to Nanawa, and, brought up in the faith, she had always served faithfully her belief and her god. She knew his trickery, his capriciousness, how sometimes he would answer a wish favourably and sometimes he would do exactly the reverse of what was desired. He had let her down now once and for all. She could tell that

by the light in Uta's eye, which meant death to her.

But though honest her heart was wicked, and her wicked heart came now to her assistance, and she found her voice.

"It is not my fault, O Uta," said Le Juan, "nor the fault of he who speaks through me. Last night in my dreams he revealed his form, and his voice was like the voice of the reef when the great waves come in. The men of Karolin are held by Nanawa, the shark-toothed one, nor will he let them go till a woman of Karolin is given to him. O Kai O fai karaka." (To be staked out on the reef for the sharks to eat.)

"And the name of the woman?" asked Uta.

"It has not been told to me yet," replied the wretched creature, fighting for time in the presence of imminent death.

But Uta had suddenly failed and lost interest, the spurt of energy had passed and the light of rage had faded from his eyes; perhaps in his inmost heart he knew that nothing availed, that his men had gone where the dead men go and that all the women of Karolin staked out on the reef for the servants of the shark-toothed one to devour would be a sacrifice offered in vain.

He moved his hand as if dismissing Le Juan. "To-morrow," said Uta. Then, turning on his side, he seemed to forget things, and Le Juan took her departure, saved for the moment.

But the king's women had heard, and in an hour there was not a woman of Karolin who did not know that their men were held by Nanawa, and that nothing would free them but the great sacrifice which might fall to the lot of any one of them.

Never for a moment did it occur to any of these unfortunates that, since Nanawa wanted a woman and since Le Juan was a woman, the simplest way out would be to stake Le Juan on the reef. Not a bit. She was sacred, being a priestess. On Karolin there was not enough morality to divide in two pieces, but there was enough religion of a sort to furnish a world.

By sunset, from Le Juan, sweating in her hut, word went forth that the victim had been revealed to her. Nalia, the wife of Leopa, and failing Nalia, her daughter Ooma, a half-witted girl of fourteen.

Never was fox cuter than Le Juan. Nalia was one of the women sent in the canoe to scout for the lost expedition; she had not come back, but she might still come back, so nothing would be done for a while, and in the meantime Uta might die, and Uta once dead, she would have no fear of anything. Having sent this pronouncement abroad, Le Juan set to work wholeheartedly to light a fire and wish Uta dead, and dead quickly.

She might have saved her fire. Uta was dying. The king of Karolin's time had come, and by midnight the fact was known.

IT was the night before the new moon, a hot breathless night, and round the king's house the air was filled with the piping and whistling of little shells, tiny varieties of the conch, blown to keep away evil spirits: the surf on the reef sounded low, and its respirations were long-spaced, like the breathing of the dying man.

Not a soul was in the house with him, though the whole population of Karolin, every woman and every child, was seated outside in rows and rings beneath the stars. The chief wife sat by the right door-post, listening, waiting to signal the fact of death, and, though not a breath of wind stirred, a vague whispering came and went like the sound the sand makes when the wind blows over it. It was the whispering of the women.

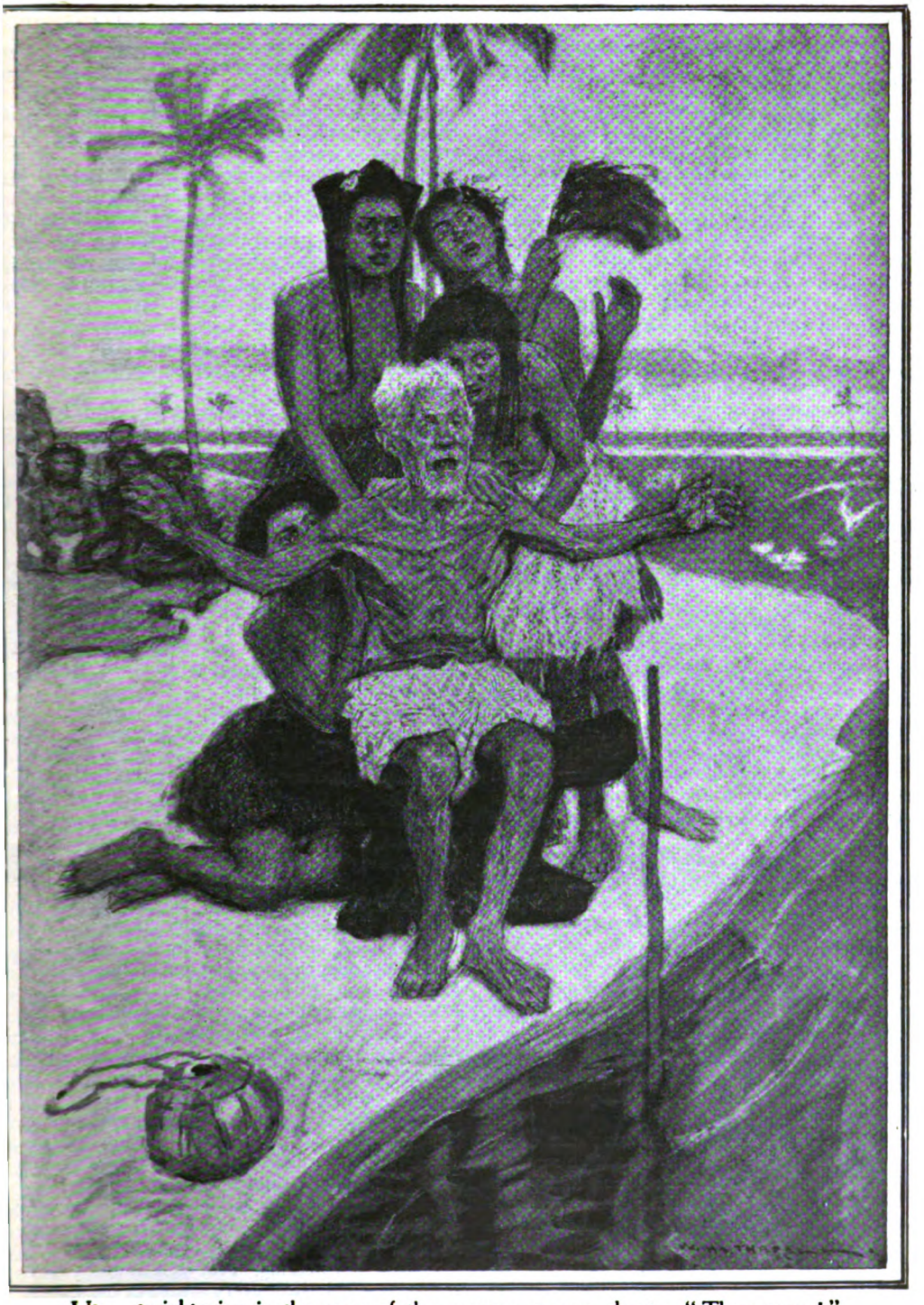
All Uta's life was running about that night outside his house from lip to lip, from memory to memory. The battles he had fought, the children he had begotten, the men he had executed with his own hand, or caused to be killed. The fight with the Spanish ship people and the people of the Paumotus. Katafa's name was mentioned, the child whom he had saved from Laminai, and who had been drowned and devoured by the sharks.

Then suddenly the whispering ceased. The chief wife had risen, and was standing erect and motionless, like a brown statue, by the door. Deceived by a cessation of the breathing in the house, she gave the signal that her lord and master was dead, but scarcely had she raised her arm to lower it again when a voice from the house made her jump as though she had received a blow.

The king of Karolin was not the man to depart from this world like a sickly child: he who had entered it shouting eighty-one years ago was not the man to leave it without saying good-bye. He was calling for his women, calling them to carry him down to the water's edge. "It is hot here," cried Uta. "I wish to be cool. I want the wind."

There was no wind, but they carried him, four women, one at each shoulder and one at each thigh, and lo! as they reached the lagoon edge and placed him on the sand facing the water and propped in their arms, the air stirred with a breath that shivered the star reflections on the lagoon. The wind of dawn had begun to blow, and in the east, beyond the break, the dawn itself showed a dubious light that brightened and burned as though day were hurrying to greet Uta and crown him for the last time with the only crown he had ever worn.

Uta watched. He was not the man to go out with the tide; the full flood was the time for him, when, bravely swimming, his soul might go fearless to the God who made the sharks and the gulls and the kings and peoples of the sea. He watched the light break on the water, and the brow of the sun rise from the



Uta, straightening in the arms of the women, gave a shout: "They come!"

ocean; then, as the morning lit the lagoon in the whole of its forty-mile stretch, Uta, straightening in the arms of the women, gave a shout:—

"They come!"

Past the piers of the break they were coming, the whole fleet of Karolin, sailing against the wind, and with all the paddles flashing, gulls wheeling and crying above them, and the flood tide boiling in their wake.

Rising like a young man, and swift as a boy, he ran where, curving inwards, they made to beach on the cream-white sand. Laminai, shouting his name, sprang on the outrigger gratings to meet him—and as he sprang on board, and they grasped each other, the great canoe, turning, shot up into the eye of the sun.

But the women saw nothing of this, nothing but the monstrous dead body of Uta supported in the arms of his wives.

XXXV.

"TAORI!" whispered Katafa, her arm around the neck of the sleeper and her lips close to his ear.

He stirred, raised himself on his elbow, and sat up, sleep dropping from him suddenly like a cloak.

"Listen!" said Katafa.

Awakening with the first beam of light, she had heard vague and far-away sounds, sounds caught and repeated by the echoes of the hated woods.

The woods that had imprisoned her once, that seemed in league against her again, the woods she had always hated, that had always hated her, barring her from the freedom she craved for, and the wide spaces that were part of her soul.

Karolin was calling, and the sea was open and the boat was there ready, nothing was wanting but the dark of the next night, and just in that first clear minute of waking from sleep, with her arm around the man she loved, came a sense of oppression, imprisonment, and evil—the woods. The vision of the copra traders and the great canoe guarding the lagoon was almost forgotten, the sense of hate and imprisonment came from the trees, and maybe in that waking moment her mind had glimpsed the core of things, for it was the trees that had brought the traders.

Then came the far-away sounds; the copra traders were combing the groves. The remains of the canoe broken on the beach had given them pause before taking full possession of the place, and they wished to see what might possibly be lurking amidst the trees.

Even as Dick listened the sounds grew clearer. A shout came from the sward. Dick parted the leaves, and there, running across the sward towards the house, was a man, a red-bearded man, gun in hand. Four others came after him, brown and naked, with frizzy black heads, and Dick, whose piercing eyes noted everything, saw the marks on their bodies, marks of old wounds and ringworm sores.

He stooped and picked up the coral-headed club he had found that day on the eastern beach, and, resting his hands lightly on it, continued to watch.

They made for the house and surrounded it whilst the red-bearded man went in. Dick could see him inside looking here and there at the shelves, at the walls, and round on the floor, as if searching for trace of the owners; then he came out, and the whole party disappeared into the grove to the left.

Ten minutes later they reappeared, recrossed the sward, and entered the woods again, making, evidently, for the eastern beach again.

"They are gone," said Katafa, "but let us still keep hidden, for they may return."

Dick, without answering, stood listening. "No," said he, "they are gone, but they will not return yet."

He pushed his way through the branches to where the boat was hidden, fetched out a fishing line, caught a robber crab, and, using its flesh for bait, came out and began to fish from the bank in the full light of day. A bream was on the hook in a couple of minutes, and leaving it for Katafa to clean and prepare, he went straight across the sward to the old firehole and began to light a fire.

Then, putting some bread-fruit to bake, he made off behind the house to the shack that the search party had missed, found the old water-breaker of the dinghy, filled it at the little well at the back of the yam patch, and returned with it on his shoulder. He placed it carefully in the boat, then he came back to where Katafa was cooking the fish and stood with his brow knotted, watching, but scarcely seeing her. He was reviewing everything in his mind, that mind so simple yet so straight-thinking and clear-sighted; another person might have been bothering about the strangers and the possibility of their return to the sward; he was thinking of nothing but the journey ahead and the meal in hand. Having determined to risk being found, he dismissed the matter from his mind.

After standing for a moment like this he suddenly turned, went back to the bank, and, having rebaited the hook with the remains of the crab, began to fish again, landing in the course of five minutes or so a three-pound schnapper and another bream. "For to-morrow," said he, as he threw them on the ground by the girl and sat down to the meal she had prepared.

Katafa said nothing. Fear was at her heart, she could scarcely eat, every breath of the breeze was a footstep, and the hateful woods that surrounded the sward seemed only waiting to seize her; but she said nothing. The calm,

certain courage of Dick bore her along with it, his coolness became part of her, but without destroying the fear that breathed on her from the woods.

Then when the meal was over and Dick, picking up the club that had never left him even when fishing, gave her directions to cook the remaining fish, place them in the boat, and stay in the boat till his return, she made no objection, though the fear of being alone was like the fear of death.

"I am going to look," said Dick, "to see if the big canoe is still there and how it lies, and count how many of them there are, and see what they are doing. Wait for me." He swept the sward, the trees, and the lagoon with a glance, then he made off, trailing the club, towards the eastern trees.

She had played her part so well that he did not guess her terror. He himself had no fear even of the ape-like men; fear had been left out of his composition when he was born in those same woods he was treading now, light of foot, silent as a panther and as swift on the trail.

KATAFA, left to herself, bent her head for a moment as though a heavy hand were pressing it down; then, straightening herself and flinging out her arms as though casting fear away, she set-to on the work before her. In half an hour it was finished, the fish cooked and wrapped in leaves and placed in the boat, the fire put out, and all traces of the meal cast into the lagoon. Then, snuggling down in the dinghy, she waited. Nothing could be more hidden than her position, nothing more secure, yet fear lay with her, clawing at her heart. Never had she felt such fear as this fear, not for herself now, but for Dick.

It was their first parting. She had not known at all what Dick was to her till now, how every fibre of her being was tied to him, and the true and awful meaning of love—the sexless love that is akin to mother love, the one thing deathless, if there is no death.

For a moment she had felt it on that night when the point of Laminai's spear killed Taminan and self in her, and she had flung passion away only to be seized by it again in the arms of Taori. Since then life had been a dream almost without thought, a happiness whose only stain was the far-off vision of Karolin.

Now alone, with the branches moving above her in the wind, she knew what love really is, the cruellest gift the gods ever gave to man and the most beautiful; the most terrible and yet the most benign.

As the embryo passes through the forms of all things once embryonic, even of the fish, before it takes the form of man, so had the soul of Katafa passed through all the forms of human soul-states in its change from the nebulous to the formed.

Antagonism when Kearney tried to hit her with the whip of seaweed; hatred when he hit her with the tia-wood ball, the longing for revenge which brought him death, the boundless irritation that had been born in her from Dick, the mad desire to destroy him, pity born in her at his cry for help, tenderness brought to her by the bird, passion full-grown in a moment and causing her to embrace the living tree, love that turned all other things to nothing—even the spell of Taminan.

Who finds a soul finds sorrow, and who finds love finds death. Death surely and at last, and almost as surely a hundred little deaths in imagination, absence, or estrangement.

She heard the movement of the leaves in the wind and the eternal voice of the surf on the reef, and beyond them the silence so full of possibilities.

Katafa knew more of the world than Dick. Dick was the child of two people who had gone far to a state of savagery; Katafa had been born in civilization. On Karolin, when she had walked as a ghost amongst ghosts, she had seen terrible things that had left her unmoved owing to the gulf that had separated her from humanity, and now from that past came all sorts of half-formless imaginings threatening Dick.

Time and again she would have left the boat and made for the eastern beach to see what had happened but for his order. She was to stay in the boat and wait for him. She could not resist that order, and fortunately for them both she did not try.

AN hour passed, and then from the trees came a sound, the sound of something moving swiftly and moving towards her; a form dashed the leaves and branches aside—it was Dick.

The club was trailing from his right hand, around his neck a tendril of convolvulus twined as though the woods, worshipping, had wreathed him, and his face was lit with battle triumph and the light of something terrible that was almost laughter. For a moment he stood there like a god of old time before his worshipper, then, letting the branches close behind him, he slipped into the boat and lay holding Katafa in his arms, his lips almost to her ear.

He had stolen through the trees to spy on the strangers, and drawing towards the eastern beach had heard the sound of axes at work. The men with holes in their ears and slit noses were cutting down trees away to the right of the beach, in amongst the trees and invisible from the beach. Having watched them through the leaves without being seen, he made for the beach itself. The great canoe was in the lagoon just as she had been on the night before, and on the sands, walking up and down, were two white

men. Men the same as Kearney, only different in face, men with hair on their faces, one red, the other black.

What happened then he told in few words.

Watching the bearded men walking up and down and talking together, the wish came on him to go up to them and look them in the face and speak to them. His pride had somehow risen against the fact that he was hiding there in concealment whilst they were walking free with command of the beach, and besides that there was the wish to speak to them, to hear them speak, to see them closer. Yet something held him back. Caution, maybe, who knows? but it did not hold him long. Just as though something were pushing him from behind, out he came from the trees and, crossing the sands, approached the two men. They stopped in their walk, turned, and stared at him.

Dick's description of the two men was succinct. They stank, gin probably, but whatever it was it offended his fine sense of smell, and the memory of it made him spit over the side of the dinghy as he told of it.

One can fancy that the disgust was written on his beautiful and expressive face as he came towards the strangers, chin uptilted and with level eyes like an object-lesson in what man ought to be contrasted with what man is, and one may fancy what the products of high civilization may have felt at the sight of a Kanaka walking as if the world belonged to him as well as the beach.

Nothing is so infectious as dislike and distaste, and the gentlemen from the ship exchanged remarks and laughed, and, though Dick had all but forgotten the language of his birth, he knew. An animal would have known what they said and what they thought, for the language of insult is universal, and Dick, standing before them, forgetting Katafa, forgetting everything, replied. Just one word: "Paraka!"

Paraka in Karolinese means a dog-fish, just as karaka means a shark. Do the Karolinites know the relationship between the two creatures, since they use only a single letter to differentiate one name from the other? Who knows? But the single letter concludes the business as far as insult is concerned, for the shark is feared and respected, the dog-fish loathed and despised—it steals the bait, it bites the fish on the hook, it will sometimes attack a man if he is defenceless, or a child.

The word heaped with insult had scarcely left Dick's mouth when the red man struck. Dick nearly fell, recovered himself, and with a great half-moon sweep of the club brought the red man low. Then he chased the black-bearded man for half a hundred yards till reason returned and he remembered the ape-men, Katafa, and all the things he ought never to have forgotten. Shouts from the anchored schooner did not delay his steps as he took cover in the trees, making with all speed for the hidden dinghy.

That was the story he told into Katafa's ear.

"Remembering you, I came back," he finished.

That was the truth. But for Katafa he would no doubt have done to the black-bearded man what he had done to the red.

As they lay secure, hidden and listening, Katafa, whose left arm was about the neck of her companion, let her right hand rest on the club that lay beside her. The coco-nut fibre, always wrapped round the club handles in wartime so as to give a better grip, had unwound a bit, and her fingers straying felt a ring surrounding the wood, lower down another ring, and lower down another. It was the three-ringed club of Karolin, the sacred pasht always carried by the eldest son of the king or his representative in battle. It had been carried by Laminai in the attack on the Spanish ship long years ago and recently by Ma, the only son of Laminai. When Dick had killed Ma in the glade it had lain there in the moonlight and had been picked up by one of the fugitives from the battle, who cast it away on the beach before plunging into the water in his vain attempt to escape.

Katafa knew that it was the royal club, a thing equivalent to a sceptre. She had seen it naked of its coco-nut fibre wrapping, carried in state, worshipped. No woman of Karolin dared handle it on pain of death, and as her fingers touched the sacred rings and the fact became clear to her that it was It, a thrill of pride went through her.

It was Dick's.

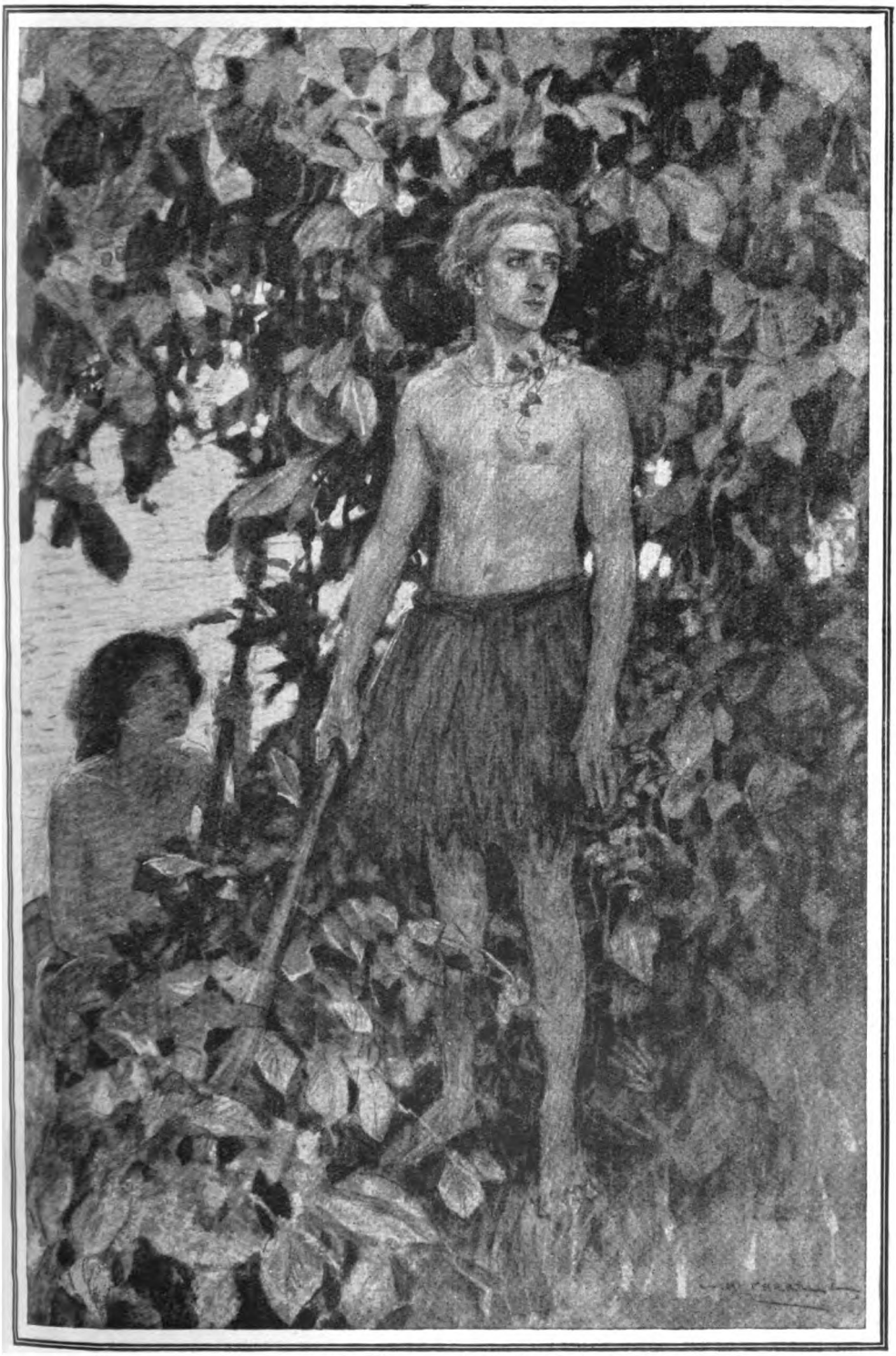
Karolin's symbol of power and success in war had fallen into the hands of Taori.

She did not know that she was handling the weapon that had slain her mother.

The pasht of Karolin might almost have been called a sword, almost likened to a hockey stick. Four feet eight inches from extremity to extremity, curved and broadened and flattened at the striking end, with a tip rim of coral mortised to the wood, it could strike with the convexity, the concavity, or the flat. It could sever a head if properly used, or make a gash half a foot deep in a man, or simply stun. No man knew its age; the fire-hardened wood of which it was made had ceased to grow on Karolin, and the art by which the coral tip had been mortised to the wood was a forgotten art.

Lying by Dick, Katafa told him what she knew about it, showed him the rings on the handle, told him that now, since Ma and all the fighting men of Karolin were gone and Uta of no account, it was his to keep and hold and wield above the heads of all other men.

Talking to him her voice suddenly ceased. The wind through the branches had brought a



For a moment he stood there like a god of old time before his worshipper.

sound. Now it came clear, a sound like the cry of hounds in pursuit of game; it died off, grew louder, ceased. Then came another sound, sudden and close, and bursting through the branches and between the trees, so close to the lagoon bank that Dick could have hit him with a biscuit, came a man. He was the black-bearded man of the beach and he was running for his life. Dick, concealed by the branches, just glimpsed him, but the glimpse was enough. Right on the heels of the fugitive came three of the ape-men, the leader armed with an axe.

They were no longer giving tongue, but he could hear their breath coming as they ran. They passed, then came a shriek from the sward, and then pandemonium.

Dick, listening with Katafa's arm about him, knew what had happened, but he did not know all, or that the red-bearded man, the owner of the schooner and the terrible personality that had dominated the expedition, being put out of count, the New Hebrideans, armed with their tree-cutting axes, had risen in revolt. That of the four white men and the dozen Polynesian sailors of the schooner not one man remained alive; that a hundred and forty Melanesians held the island in their grasp, the schooner and the trade goods and rum on board of her.

At one stroke the club of Ma had done this work of magic with no magic to help it but that of its own perfect balance and the personality of its wielder.

Safe hidden in the bushes, they heard the sounds from the sward die down. Then came silence, broken only by the old tune of the reef, the whisper of the wind, and the sounds of the birds in the branches.

XXXVI.

IT was close on midnight, and the ebb running strong showed through the branches an occasional lazy swirl on the moonlit lagoon water. At the break it was racing hard, but here the water seemed hardly to move. The wind still held from the north, and as Dick untied from the tree roots it parted and closed the branches above, showering Katafa with moonlight and shadow. He pushed off with a scull, and before he could take his seat again, the current, lazy though it looked, had slued the bow of the little boat right round.

They had settled to get away when the schooner people were asleep, but sleep was far from the island that night, to judge by the vague sounds that came from the east between the breathings of the wind. But the tide was outrunning and the hour was come, and Dick was not of the order that waits for a better opportunity. Stepping the mast with the sail lightly brailed and ready to break out, he took the sculls, and the moonlit glade and the cape of wild coco-nuts passed behind them out of sight for ever.

And now, as they moved swiftly, great ripples running out from the divided water and spreading towards bank and reef, Katafa, who was steering, saw something beyond the tree-tops, a rose-red pulsating light that seemed fighting the light of the moon, and above the light smoke like blown hair streaming on the wind towards the south; and now, as the dinghy, driven by sculls and current, drew on to the great curve that led to the eastern beach, the sounds that had reached them by the sward loudened and became more shrill, and through the voices of men outshouting gulls, and gulls outshouting men, came a new sound, sudden, sonorous, and without cease, the roar of flame triumphant.

The dinghy turned the last cape into a world of light. The schooner, fired by accident or design and straining at her anchor chain, was blazing against the night like a bonfire; lagoon, reef, and woods were lit broad as by day, and crossing the roar of the flames the shouting of the reef gulls came mixing with the yelling from the beach, where a hundred black forms danced and sang and screeched, mad with the black joy of rum and destruction.

Katafa, half-standing up for a moment with the red light shining on her face, gazed fascinated with the terrible glamour of the thing; then she sank back, steering between ship and shore.

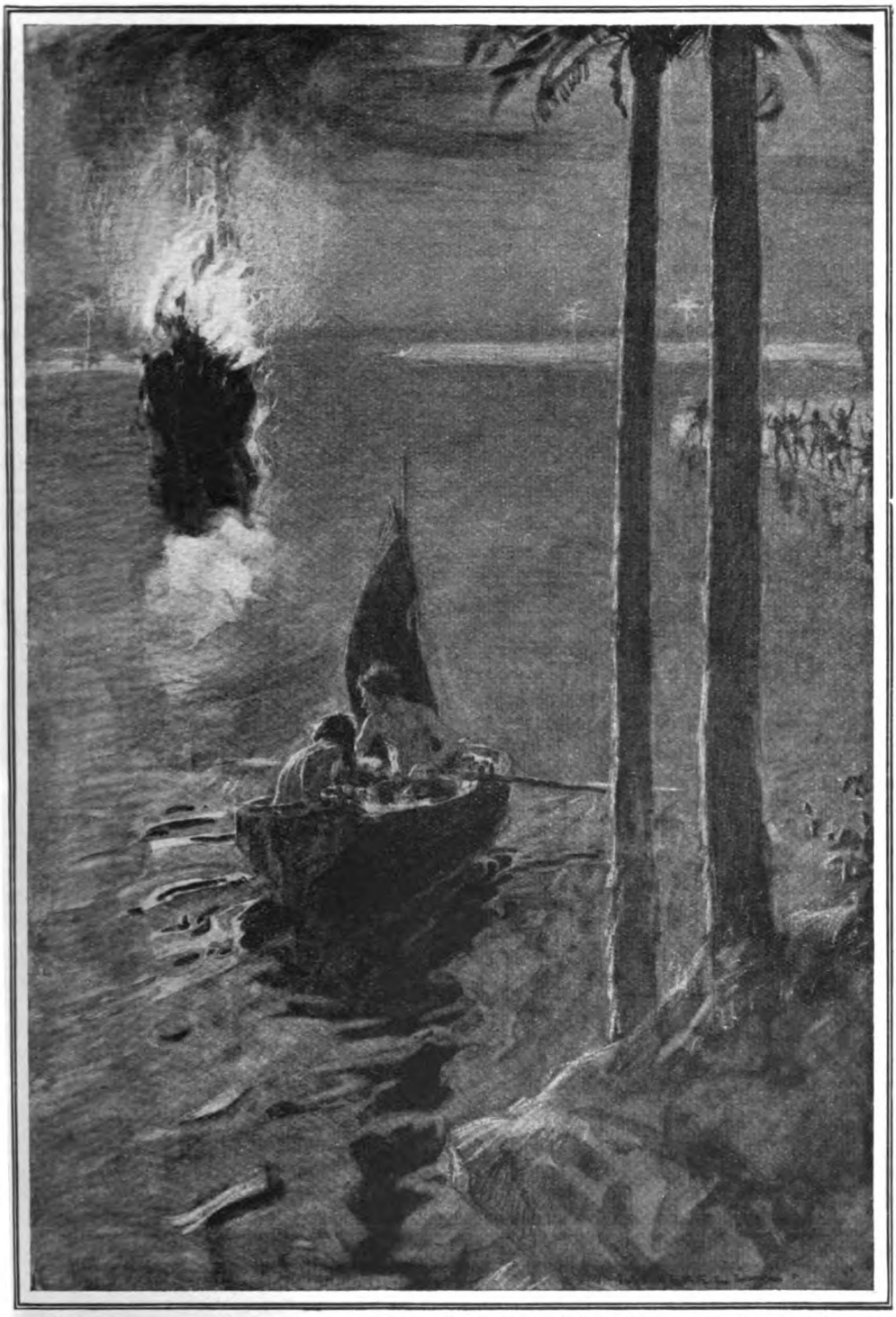
Dick shouted to her, she knew, and leaving the tiller for a moment leaned over him, unbrailed the sail, and gave it to the following wind.

Then, as the boat raced for salvation and without releasing the tiller, she saw two things; to left, and for a moment, the blazing schooner pouring flame to the sky, roaring at her, scorching her, and with its bowsprit festooned with wretches who dared not drop into the shark-filled lagoon; to right, the white beach a stone's-throw away, and, racing the boat along the beach, shouting at her, threatening her, a great crowd of men, naked, black, and mad with rum.

Then, in a flash, all this was wiped out and the fire-lit concave of the sail before her was outlined on the calm night beyond.

Dick, who had spoken no word since his order to her, half rose; she saw his face lit by the retreating blaze, and the rage and hatred in it; she saw him fling out his arm at the beach and schooner, and she heard his voice shrill against the cries that followed him. It was the cry that the companions of Sru had hurled at him long ago, "Kara! Kara! Kara!" "War! war! war!"

Then, with sail filling, they again headed south against the long heave of the Pacific. Behind them lay the glow of the still-burning wreck, that was seen that night at Karolin.



The dinghy turned the last cape into a world of light. The schooner was blazing like a bonfire, and on the beach a hundred black forms danced and sang and screeched.

XXXVII.

HERE there was peace. The great dark swell coming up and passing in the moonlight, the following wind, the stars; nothing remained but these, these and the whisper of the reef far astern, and the far glow of the burning ship.

Katafa steered, the great bunch of bananas up against her legs, Nan on his stick beside her, the head of Nan hanging over the transom like the head of a person contemplating sea-sickness.

They had never thought of dishonouring him by taking him off his stick. He was something real to them, and, without thinking back and putting things together, they felt that he was an influence in their lives.

They had with them food and water enough for a week. Dick had left little to chance. When a tiny child he had almost frightened Kearney by putting the fish away in the shadow of the thwart to prevent the sun from spoiling it, and this natural ability for dealing with things, which had been a gift from his parents, had not been decreased by life on the island.

Now, with all he had ever known taken away from him by distance, facing a new world and the unknown sea, this ability to deal with things showed itself in his fearlessness and absolute confidence in himself, the boat, and the course they were steering.

By noon they had been twelve hours on their journey, making two and a half knots against the current. Thirty miles to the north lay Palm Tree, whilst in the south, like a beacon, the forty-mile lagoon of Karolin signalled to them from the blue; and now as it drew towards sunset, Katafa, who had fallen asleep, awoke, and, sitting up, seemed listening as though to catch the sound of something she had heard in her dreams.

There was nothing, nothing but the slap of the bow wash and the creak of the mast and the lapping of the long swell as it kissed the planks, nothing but the cry of a gull that passed them. It was flying south.

Yet still she listened, resting her head against the gunnel, her eyes fixed on the space of sky beneath the sail. Nothing.

Then, as the sun, now far down in the west, was reaching to the sea that boiled up in gold to meet him, Katafa raised her head. Dick heard it now, a faint far breathing, a murmur that came and passed and came again, a voice that was not the wind.

It was Karolin.

Karolin invisible but singing, calling the gulls home across the evening sea.

Far away they could be seen flying from east and west towards the invisible land, and now as the sun went down like a ship on fire and a single great star broke out above the purple west, the whisper of the great forty-mile reef loudened and changed to a definite murmur like the voice of a far-off multitude.

KATAFA, standing up for a moment and steadying herself with her hand on the mast, seemed to have forgotten Dick. Karolin was still a great way off, but its voice was enough to dispel all doubt and fear. She knew these waters, and all the old sea instincts, that had given her distance and direction when out in the fishing canoes, returned, led by memory and the voice of the reef.

The fishing bank where the squall had struck her canoe, blowing Taiofa overboard, lay straight before them; they could anchor there for the night; it was safer to make the lagoon entrance in the morning.

She told him this, and then, resting in the bottom of the boat with her elbow on a thwart, she watched and listened whilst the moon and the stars took the sky, and the voice of the distant reef came louder against the wind.

Then the running swell looming up and passing in the gloom altered in character, and away to starboard something showed white, something that came and went like the flicker of a handkerchief—a natural sea beacon, the foam on the Karaka rock.

Katafa knew. They were on the fishing bank.

The Karaka rises sharp like the spire of a cathedral from the great mountain range that forms the Palu bank. At full flood it is submerged entirely, but even then it will break if there is a heavy swell on. It is the only sign of the bank and the only danger to ships, but to Katafa it was a friend.

Crawling forward, whilst Dick let go the sheet, she dropped the anchor they had so often used when fishing off Palm Tree; it fell in twelve-fathom water and held.

It was near here that she had anchored when the squall struck the canoe, driving her from Karolin, but to-night there was no danger of squalls. The wind had sunk to a steady breathing from the north, and the swell had fallen to a gentle heave that rocked the little boat like a cradle to the lullaby of the surf.

Dick, tired out, had fallen asleep lying in the bottom of the boat, and clasped by the girl, just as his father had fallen asleep long years ago clasped by Emmeline and death.

But death was far away to-night. Life ringed the sleepers with its charm and the future spoke in the voice of the reef.

"Taori, Karolin has called you to be her king and rule her people and make her laws and break her chains of error; for this you were born, for this you still live, and war shall be your portion whilst you live, and peace shall crown your victories and lead you at last to the eternal peace which is Freedom."

With his hand on the pasht, unconscious as the dead, he slept, whilst the sea wind blew and the great reef sang, mourned, murmured and spoke.

XXXVIII.

BROAD as the reef break was at Karolin, no ship under sail could enter at the full ebb. Sweeping with an eight-knot clip and boiling round the coral piers, the waters of the great lagoon met the northward running current in a leaping cross sea of aquamarine and emerald whipped to snow when the wind was in the east. At slack all this died away; a child might have swum the passage, and a leaf would have drifted with scarce a change of place. This was the sea gate of Karolin, and the keepers of the gate were the sun and the moon.

The sun and the moon and the wind and the sea, these four held the great atoll between them, and had here a significance unguessed by dwellers on the continents and lands of the world, for here the new and the full moons were manifestly the letters-in of the great spring tides, and the first and third quarter moons the admitters of the neaps. Here the sun was seen from his rising to his setting, from his leap to his plunge, and storm and halcyon and calm cast their spells on life unbroken and uninterfered with by hills or walls or mountains or forests.

The people of Karolin were gathered together this morning on the beach by the gridiron of coral where for ages past victims had been sacrificed to Nanawa, the shark-toothed one, by his priests and through the agency of his servants, the sharks. Le Juan, after the death of Uta Matu, had temporized. She did not in the least mind sacrificing the half-witted girl, Ooma, but she greatly dreaded barren results.

Including the king's wives, there were over two hundred women on Karolin all wanting their men back, and close on three hundred children, more than half of whom were boys; of these boys a large number were over twelve and a good number over fourteen, all ripe for mischief, without much fear of Nanawa and with the antagonism of all boys towards old women of Le Juan's type.

Le Juan had sent the fathers and husbands of this terrible population to a war from which they had not returned, and, worse than that, she had made herself responsible under Nanawa for their return. She had declared that they were "held" by Nanawa till the great sacrifice of a woman had been offered to him, yet, feeling that the tricky shark god had played her another trick, she simply dared not make the sacrifice. She knew what would happen if it failed. She felt the temper of the people as a man feels the sharp point of a dagger against his breast, so she temporized, fell into pretended trances, had pretended visions, declared that nothing was to be done until it was absolutely sure that the mother of Ooma would not return, and sweated consumedly at night as she lay in her shack listening to the sounds of the village and the shouting of the ribald boys and the boom of the surf on the reef, whilst Ooma, half-witted and happy, slept, protected from death by the ferocious beast that was the soul of Le Juan and whose one dread was extinction—through failure.

But the time had come, and the death warrant was sealed by the far red speck of light on the northern sky caused by the burning of the schooner.

A boy had seen it; two minutes later the whole village was watching it, and next day it had got into the minds of the people. It was looked on as a sign—of what, no one could say; but it was an angry sign, and that night Nalia, the chief wife of the dead Uta, had a dream.

She dreamt that Uta appeared to her, and that the red light was his wrath that the great sacrifice had not been made. He also declared that if it was not made at once, worse would befall Karolin. That was the end. Before dawn Le Juan, dragged from her hut to hear the news, gave in, and as the sun broke above the lagoon the preparations began.

OOMA, awakening to another happy day of life, was anointed and rubbed with palm oil to make her acceptable to the god. She laughed with pleasure. She was of the happy half-witted kind with sense enough to know that she was being fêted. When they put flowers in her hair she laughed and laughed, and when they led her by the hand to a suddenly-prepared banquet where she alone was the guest, she went laughing, the boys dancing around her and shouting: "Karak, o he, Ooma, karaka."

The last of the tide was flowing out of the lagoon when, the banquet over, Le Juan, taking the hand of Ooma, led her along by the waterside, followed by the whole population of Karolin. By the break great sheets and coils of glass-smooth water, pale as forget-me-nots, could be seen moving between the wind-flaws where a half-dead breeze touched the surface; ahead of the advancing crowd the gridiron of coral lay almost entirely uncovered by the tide.

Nature, with that assistance which she sometimes lends to inhumanity, had tilted this terrible shelf so that the gradually rising water would take the victim to the waist at quarter flood; art had driven in iron bars for the binding. At quarter flood, or before, the sharks, who always knew what was going on, instructed maybe by Nanawa, would begin their struggle for the prize.

Then, as the procession approached the gridiron, Ooma suddenly began to hold back. Some instinctive warning had come to her that danger lay ahead, that all things were not as they pictured themselves to be; that the flowers and the feasting and all the splendours of that most glorious morning of her life were veils of illusion behind which lay terror.

She stopped, trying to release her hand from the grip of Le Juan; then, struggling with her captor, she began to scream. They seized her, still screaming, and brutally cast her on the coral, binding her to it by each thigh, by the wrist, and by the shoulders. Then, as she lay there half-stunned, voiceless, and staring at the sky, suddenly from the great ring of the atoll, rising to heaven like a protest, came a sigh, profound, from the very heart of the sea. It was the turning of the tide.

XXXIX.

AT sunrise that morning Katafa had awakened to find the wind fallen to a gentle breeze. Away to the south she could see the palms of Karolin, and across the scarcely ruffled swell she could hear the song of the surf on the coral.

The karaka rock spouting to starboard told her the state of the tide; it was falling. Hours must elapse before they could make the break with the flood, so, instead of waking Dick, who was still soundly asleep, she sat watching the gulls and the wind-flaws on the water, listening, dreaming.

Far away over the past her mind flitted like the frigate bird, her namesake, tireless, covering vast distances. She saw again the reef where she had wandered as a child, that endless sunlit coral road, the sea wrack and the shells, and the gulls always flying, the beaches where she had played like a ghost child with children untouchable as ghosts. The vast sunsets, the tumultuous dawns, the nights when, under the coil of the great smoke, she had watched the torches of the fish spearers on the reef, and the night when under the sickle moon the sea had taken her and swept her away to find love and a soul.

A gull sweeping past saluted the boat with a cry, and Dick, stirring in his sleep, awoke, stretched, held out his arms, and then clasped them around Katafa, gazing as she pointed away to the south, where every lift of the swell showed the palms of the great atoll whose mirror blaze was paling the sky.

Then, hauling in the anchor and setting the sail to the light wind, that had shifted to the west of north, Katafa steered heading for the east, whilst Dick handed her food and water from the breaker, eating scarcely anything himself.

His eyes were fixed on the far-off shore to starboard, the endless shore that showed nothing but gulls and palms, foam jets when a greater breaker broke on the coral, all seen against air luminous with the dazzle of the vast lagoon.

And now, still following the turn of the reef, Katafa pointed ahead, where far away past the northern pier of the break the whole sea danced as the outpouring waters met the current, the last of the ebb rushing like a river, foam-dashed, jubilant, green against blue, white against green, and gulls over all, gulls wheeling and shouting and diving and drifting on the wind like turbulent spirits in the sun blaze. Katafa held on, still steering due east as though to leave Karolin behind, on and on till the vast sea disclosed itself to the south and the turmoil at the break died and oiled away into the slack. Deep in the knowledge of those waters she held on, steering now to the south-west against the current; then, turning the boat at last, she made due west. The wind had freshened and backed to the east of north as if to help them, yet it was half flood before the piers of the break showed clear before them, the water pouring in and lashing the coral, leaping on the outer beach and filling the air with its fume and song.

And now the blue and blazing lagoon, where the fleets of the world might have harboured, flung out its mighty arms, the roar and thunder and spray of the breakers saluted them, and then, under a storm of gulls, the spray and thunder and torment of the sea passed like a dream, and before them across the untroubled waters lay the white beach where Uta Matu had watched the dawn and the return of the fleet that never more could return.

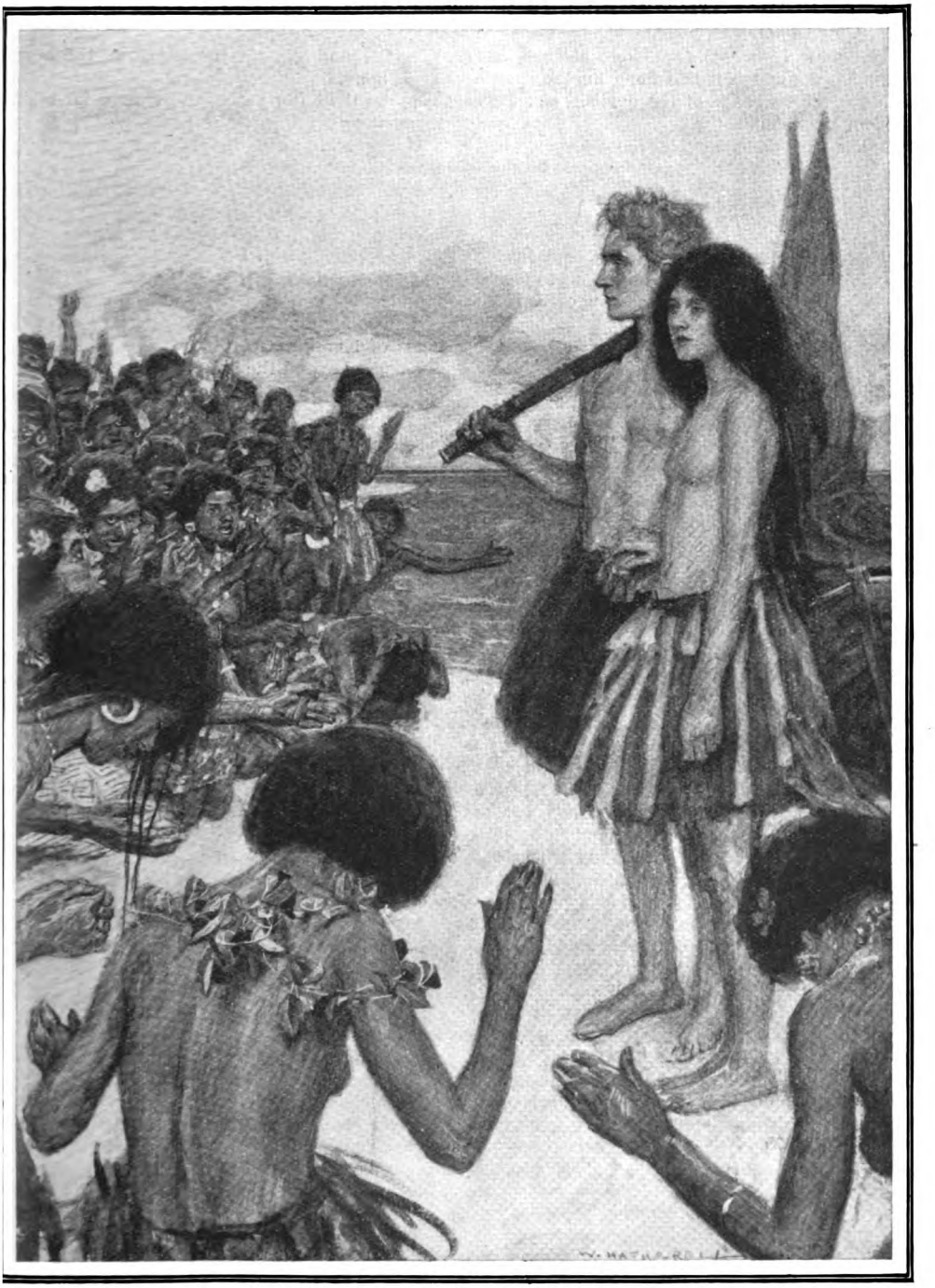
The beach was crowded, and the sharks had snatched away the last of the last offering ever to be made to the great god Nanawa. Steering for the beach, Katafa saw nothing but the crowd—women, children, boys, all lined by the water's edge; dumb, with scarcely a movement, watching the approaching boat that had appeared as if in answer to the sacrifice of Ooma.

Amongst them stood Le Juan, and as she watched, wondering like the others and as dumb, the rapidly-approaching boat called up in her mind a vision from far away—the boat of the Spanish ship of years ago, the ship that had brought Katafa and whose timbers lay sunk ten fathoms deep, crusted by the ever-building coral. She saw in the boat the answer of Nanawa, the evil god who was to play her one last trick, for, as the prow dashed on the sand and as though the god had suddenly stripped a curtain aside, she saw Katafa.

Ah, the spirit of prophecy had not been denied to her those long years ago when, urging Uta Matu to destroy the child, she saw in her the agent of revenge for the murdered papalagi. Katafa, who had brought Taiofa to his death, and Sru, Laminai, and all the men of Karolin. Katafa, who had destroyed half a nation to recreate it; Katafa, who had vanished to return a woman beautiful, like a star risen from the sea.

She saw nothing else, neither Taori, who stood on the sands beside the girl, nor the people, who had surged back as the cry rang along the beach: "Katafa, from the dead she has returned, Katafa!"

She saw neither the boat that the lagoon



The cry rang along the beach: "Katafa, from the dead she has returned, Katafa!"

waves were driving broadside on to the sand, nor the lagoon, nor the sky beyond; like a beast, the spirit that had dwelt with her always swelled and seized her and shook her and spoke, spoke in words that were strange and unknown, as though it had flung human speech aside for the language of the devils.

Then, as though the great hand that had used her was crushing her and dropping her, she fell, and with her the power of Nanawa for ever.

XL.

THE sun was near his setting, and in the golden light Nan stood on his post erected by the house of Uta, once king of Karolin, and in the house, dimly to be seen, were the little ships of Taori, toys of the long ago, symbols now of the sea power that he dreamed of vaguely as he stood in the sunset on the reef with Katafa, facing the line of the empty canoe-houses.

Only yesterday he had stood, armed with the pasht, by the dead body of Le Juan, whilst the people, listening to the words of Katafa, proclaimed him their chief, yet by this evening he had visited the canoe-houses and had sent fisher boys to the southern beach to fetch Aioma, Palia, and Tafuta, the three old men, too old for war, but canoe builders all of them, and holding between them the secret of the construction of the great war canoes.

For to Dick, standing with uptilted chin before the women and the children and the boys, who, with the sure instinct of children and women and boys, had seen in him their ruler, a vision had come, God-sent, of the world that lay beyond the world he knew. He had seen again Ma in the moonlight and the spear of Laminai, the red-bearded man he had put to death, and the black-bearded man chased through the woods, the burning schooner and the ape-men who still held the beach of Palm Tree, and as he looked on Katafa, on the women and helpless children, on the boys growing towards war age but still unripe, the great knowledge came to him, as it came to the earliest men who fronted the wolf, that strength is possession and that without possession love is a mockery. That dreams based on unreality are dreams. And as he gazed on these helpless ones and beyond them, his face, altering, took again that far-sighted look which to Lestrange had recalled Emmeline across the years—as though had returned to him the genius of the mother, which is the spirit of all things noble and great in man.

DICK and Katafa turned from the canoe-houses and came along the reef. Here on the outer beach, the village far behind them, they sat down to rest.

It was the first time they had found themselves alone since leaving Palm Tree. All last night the village had hummed around them, bonfires burning all along the coral and bonfires answering from the southern beach, conch answering conch, whilst the great stars watched and the breakers thundered as they had thundered at the coming of Uta Matu to power, of Uta Maru his father, and all the line of the kings of Karolin stretching to the remote past, but never beyond the voice of the sea.

Here they were at last alone, all trouble done with for the moment, the past like a tempestuous sea, the future veiled and vague but great and full of the splendours of Promise.

For a moment neither of them spoke, their eyes following the spray clouds of the breakers and the flighting gulls wheeling above the flooding sea. Then as they turned one to the other and as he seized her by the shoulders, to Katafa, for the first time, fully came the knowledge of the splendour of man crowned with power. Man triumphant, mighty, kingly, and dominant. For in the past few hours Taori had changed from the passionate boy to a man fit to be the ruler of men.

Holding her from him for a moment, his head drawn back like the head of a cobra, he consumed her with his eyes. Then he struck, crushing her with his arms, his lips to her lips, her throat, her breast, whilst the full flooding sea shook the coral with its thunder and the gulls in great circles swung chanting above the haze of the spray.

AS the sun touched the horizon, pouring its gold across the outgoing tide, Katafa, turning from her lover and sweeping the sea with her eyes, saw floating far above the northern sky-line something that was not cloud, that was not land, that was not sea. The ghost of an island, lovely and illusive as the land where, in his dream, Lestrange had met his vanished children.

Palm Tree, far-lifted above all things earthly—by mirage.

THE END.

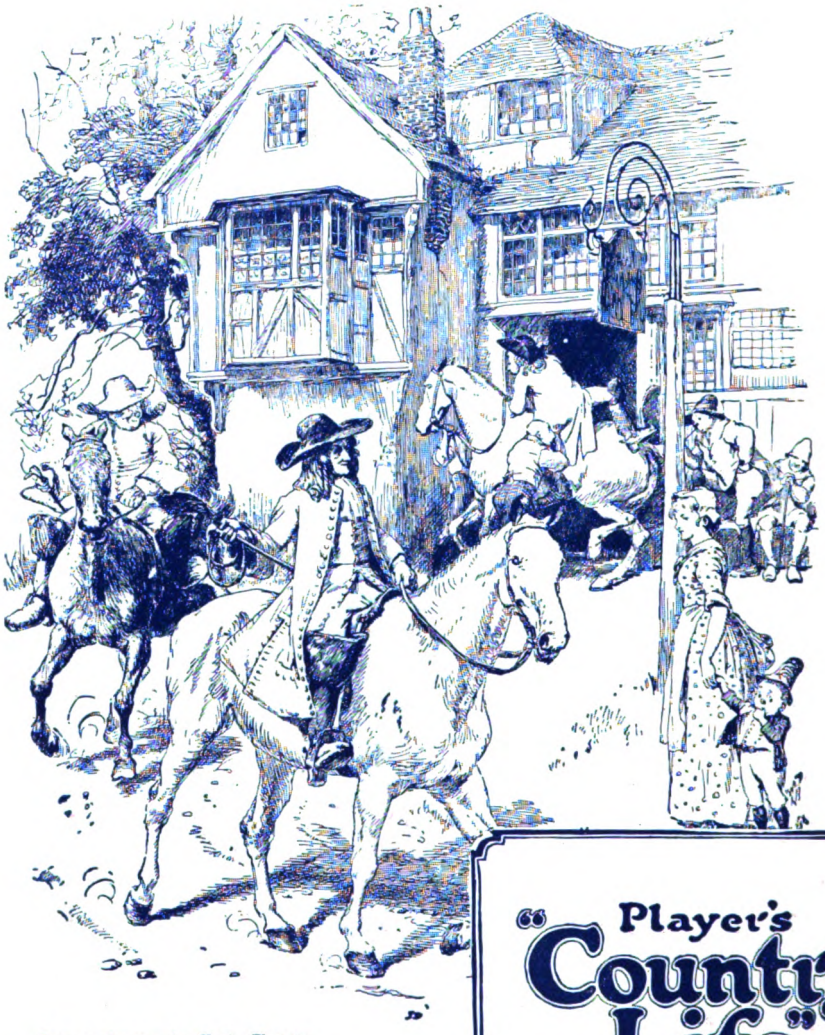
HUMOROUS
RIES BY P.G.WODEHOUSE

THE STRAND MAGAZINE

READ

ETHEL M. DELL'S

POWERFUL LOVE STORY



From a drawing by Hugh Thomson
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The morning rose; the supper reck'ning paid,
And our due fees discharged to man and maid;
The ready ostler near the stirrup stands,
And as we mount our half-pence load his hands.
—From "A JOURNEY TO EXETER."

P. 1022

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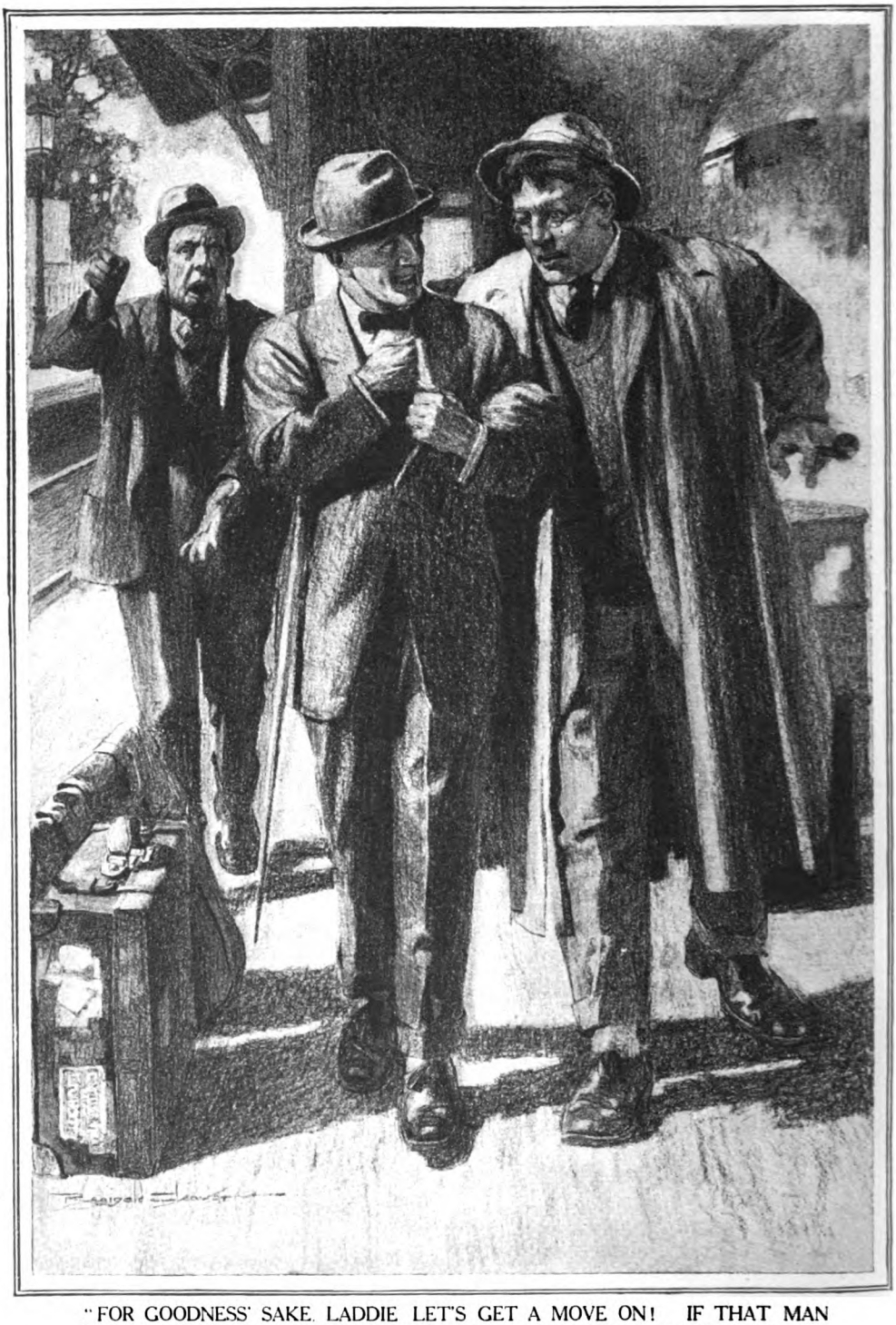
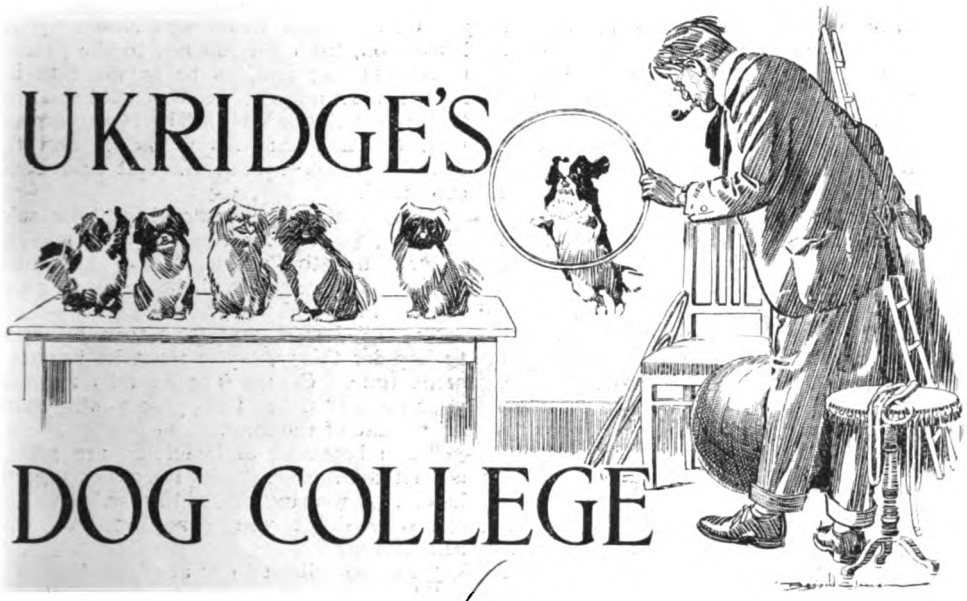


"FOR GOODNESS' SAKE, LADDIE LET'S GET A MOVE ON! IF THAT MAN KNEW WE HAD TWENTY QUID ON US, OUR LIVES WOULDN'T BE SAFE. HE'D MAKE ONE SPRING."

(See page 441.)

UKRIDGE'S DOG COLLEGE



by

P. G. WODEHOUSE

ILLUSTRATED BY REGINALD CLEAVER

"LADDIE," said Stanley Featherstonehaugh Ukridge, that much-enduring man, helping himself to my tobacco and slipping the pouch absently into his pocket, "listen to me, you son of Belial."

"What?" I said, retrieving the pouch.

"Do you want to make an enormous fortune?"

"I do."

"Then write my biography. Bung it down on paper, and we'll split the proceeds. I've been making a pretty close study of your stuff lately, old horse, and it's all wrong. The trouble with you is that you don't plumb the well-springs of human nature and all that. You just think up some rotten yarn about some-dam-thing-or-other and shove it down. Now, if you tackled my life, you'd have something worth writing about. Pots of money in it, my boy—English serial rights and American serial rights and book rights and dramatic rights and movie rights—well, you can take it from me that, at a conservative estimate, we should clean up at least fifty thousand pounds apiece."

"As much as that?"

"Fully that. And listen, laddie, I'll tell you what. You're a good chap and we've been pals for years, so I'll let you have my share of the English serial rights for a hundred pounds down."

"What makes you think I've got a hundred pounds?"

"Well, then, I'll make it my share of the English *and* American serial rights for fifty."

"Your collar's come off its stud."

"How about my complete share of the whole dashed outfit for twenty-five?"

"Not for me, thanks."

"Then I'll tell you what, old horse," said Ukridge, inspired. "Just lend me half a crown to be going on with."

IF the leading incidents of S. F. Ukridge's disreputable career are to be given to the public—and not, as some might suggest, decently hushed up—I suppose I am the man to write them. Ukridge and I have been intimate since the days of school. Together we sported on the green, and when he was expelled no one missed him more than I. An unfortunate business, this expulsion. Ukridge's generous spirit, ever

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ill-attuned to school rules, caused him eventually to break the solemnest of them all by sneaking out at night to try his skill at the coco-nut-shies of the local village fair; and his foresight in putting on scarlet whiskers and a false nose for the expedition was completely neutralized by the fact that he absent-mindedly wore his school cap throughout the entire proceedings. He left the next morning, regretted by all.

After this there was a hiatus of some years in our friendship. I was at Cambridge, absorbing culture, and Ukridge, as far as I could gather from his rare letters and the reports of mutual acquaintances, flitting about the world like a snipe. Somebody met him in New York, just off a cattle-ship. Somebody else saw him in Buenos Ayres. Somebody, again, spoke sadly of having been pounced on by him at Monte Carlo and touched for a fiver. It was not until I settled down in London that he came back into my life. We met in Piccadilly one day, and resumed our relations where they had been broken off. Old associations are strong, and the fact that he was about my build and so could wear my socks and shirts drew us very close together.

Then he disappeared again, and it was a month or more before I got news of him.

It was George Tupper who brought the news. George was head of the school in my last year, and he has fulfilled exactly the impeccable promise of those early days. He is in the Foreign Office, doing well and much respected. He has an earnest, pulpy heart and takes other people's troubles very seriously. Often he had mourned to me like a father over Ukridge's erratic progress through life, and now, as he spoke, he seemed to be filled with a solemn joy, as over a reformed prodigal.

"Have you heard about Ukridge?" said George Tupper. "He has settled down at last. Gone to live with an aunt of his who owns one of those big houses on Wimbledon Common. A very rich woman. I am delighted. It will be the making of the old chap."

I suppose he was right in a way, but to me this tame subsidence into companionship with a rich aunt in Wimbledon seemed somehow an indecent, almost a tragic, end to a colourful career like that of S. F. Ukridge. And when I met the man a week later my heart grew heavier still.

IT was in Oxford Street at the hour when women come up from the suburbs to shop; and he was standing among the dogs and commissionaires outside Selfridge's. His arms were full of parcels, his face was set in a mask of wan discomfort, and he was so beautifully dressed that for an instant I did not recognize him. Everything which the Correct Man wears was assembled on his person, from the silk hat to the patent-leather boots; and, as he confided to me in the first minute, he was suffering the tortures of the damned. The boots pinched him, the hat hurt his forehead, and the collar was worse than the hat and boots combined.

"She makes me wear them," he said, moodily, jerking his head towards the interior of the store and uttering a sharp howl as the movement caused the collar to gouge his neck.

"Still," I said, trying to turn his mind to happier things, "you must be having a great time. George Tupper tells me that your aunt is rich. I suppose you're living off the fat of the land."

"The browsing and sluicing are good," admitted Ukridge. "But it's a wearing life, laddie. A wearing life, old horse."

"Why don't you come and see me sometimes?"

"I'm not allowed out at night."

"Well, shall I come and see you?"

A look of poignant alarm shot out from under the silk hat.

"Don't dream of it, laddie," said Ukridge, earnestly. "Don't dream of it. You're a good chap—my best pal and all that sort of thing—but the fact is, my standing in the home's none too solid even now, and one sight of you would knock my prestige into hash. Aunt Julia would think you worldly."

"I'm not worldly."

"Well, you look worldly. You wear a squash hat and a soft collar. If you don't mind my suggesting it, old horse, I think, if I were you, I'd pop off now before she comes out. Good-bye, laddie."

"Ichabod!" I murmured sadly to myself, as I passed on down Oxford Street. "Ichabod!"

I should have had more faith. I should have known my Ukridge better. I should have realized that a London suburb could no more imprison that great man permanently than Elba did Napoleon.

ONE afternoon, as I let myself into the house in Ebury Street of which I rented at that time the bedroom and sitting-room on the first floor, I came upon Bowles, my landlord, standing in listening attitude at the foot of the stairs.

"Good afternoon, sir," said Bowles. "A gentleman is waiting to see you. I fancy I heard him calling me a moment ago."

"Who is he?"

"A Mr. Ukridge, sir. He——"

A vast voice boomed out from above.

"Bowles, old horse!"

Ukridge was standing among the dogs and commissionaires outside Selfridge's. His arms were full of parcels, and he was so beautifully dressed that for an instant I did not recognize him.

Bowles, like all other proprietors of furnished apartments in the south-western district of London, was an ex-butler, and about him, as about all ex-butlers, there clung like a garment an aura of dignified superiority which had never failed to crush my spirit. He was a man of portly aspect, with a bald head and prominent eyes of a lightish green—eyes that seemed to weigh me dispassionately and find me wanting. "H'm!" they seemed to say. "Young—very young. And not at all what I have been accustomed to in the best places." To hear this dignitary addressed—and in a shout at that—as "old horse" affected me with much the same sense of imminent chaos as would afflict a devout young curate if he saw his bishop slapped on the back. The shock, therefore, when he responded not merely mildly but with what almost amounted to camaraderie was numbing.

"Sir?" cooed Bowles.

"Bring me six bones and a corkscrew."

"Very good, sir."

Bowles retired, and I bounded upstairs and flung open the door of my sitting-room.

"Great Scott!" I said, blankly.

THE place was a sea of Pekingese dogs. Later investigation reduced their numbers to six, but in that first moment there seemed to be hundreds. Goggling eyes met mine wherever I looked. The room was a forest of waving tails. With his back against the mantelpiece, smoking placidly, stood Ukridge.

"Hullo, laddie!" he said, with a genial wave of the hand, as if to make me free of the place. "You're just in time. I've got to dash off and catch a train in a quarter of an hour. Stop it, you mutts!" he bellowed, and the six Pekingese, who had been barking steadily since my arrival, stopped in mid-yap, and were still. Ukridge's personality seemed to exercise a magnetism over the animal kingdom, from ex-butlers to Pekes, which bordered on the uncanny. "I'm off to Sheep's Cray, in Kent. Taken a cottage there."

"Are you going to live there?"

"Yes."

"But what about your aunt?"

"Oh, I've left her. Life is stern and life is earnest, and if I mean to make a fortune I've got to bustle about and not stay cooped up in a place like Wimbledon."

"Something in that."

"Besides which, she told me the very sight of me made her sick and she never wanted to see me again."

I might have guessed, directly I saw him, that some upheaval had taken place. The sumptuous raiment which had made him such a treat to the eye at our last meeting was gone, and he was back in his pre-Wimbledon costume, which was, as the advertisements say, distinctively individual. Over grey flannel trousers, a golf coat, and a brown sweater he wore like a royal robe a bright yellow mackintosh. His collar had broken free from its stud and showed a couple of inches of bare neck. His hair was disordered, and his masterful nose was topped by a pair of steel-rimmed pince-nez cunningly attached to his flapping ears with ginger-beer wire. His whole appearance spelled revolt.

Bowles manifested himself with a plateful of bones.

"That's right. Chuck 'em down on the floor."

"Very good, sir."

"I like that fellow," said Ukridge, as the door closed. "We had a dashed interesting talk before you came in. Did you know he had a cousin on the music-halls?"

"He hasn't confided in me much."

"He's promised me an introduction to him later on. May be useful to be in touch with a man who knows the ropes. You see, laddie, I've hit on the most amazing scheme." He swept his arm round dramatically, overturning a plaster cast of the Infant Samuel at Prayer. "All right, all right, you can mend it with glue or something, and, anyway, you're probably better without it. Yessir, I've hit on a great scheme. The idea of a thousand years."

"What's that?"

"I'm going to train dogs."

"Train dogs?"

"For the music-hall stage. Dog acts, you know. Performing dogs. Pots of money in it. I start in a modest way with these six. When I've taught 'em a few tricks, I sell them to a fellow in the profession for a large sum and buy twelve more. I train those, sell 'em for a large sum, and with the money buy twenty-four more. I train those——"

"Here, wait a minute." My head was beginning to swim. I had a vision of England paved with Pekingese dogs, all doing tricks. "How do you know you'll be able to sell them?"

"Of course I shall. The demand's enormous. Supply can't cope with it. At a conservative estimate I should think I ought to scoop in four or five thousand pounds the first year. That, of course, is before the business really starts to expand."

"I see."

"When I get going properly, with a

dozen assistants under me and an organized establishment, I shall begin to touch the big money. What I'm aiming at is a sort of Dogs' College out in the country somewhere. Big place with a lot of ground. Regular classes and a set curriculum. Large staff, each member of it with so many dogs under his care, me looking on and superintending. Why, once the thing starts moving it'll run itself, and all I shall have to do will be to sit back and endorse the cheques. It isn't as if I would have to confine my operations to England. The demand for performing dogs is universal throughout the civilized world. America wants performing dogs Australia wants performing dogs. Africa could do with a few, I've no doubt. My aim, laddie, is gradually to get a monopoly of the trade. I want everybody who needs a performing dog of any description to come automatically to me. And I'll tell you what, laddie. If you like to put up a bit of capital, I'll let you in on the ground floor."

"No, thanks."

"All right. Have it your own way. Only don't forget that there was a fellow who put nine hundred dollars into the Ford Car business when it was starting and he collected a cool forty million. I say, is that clock right? Great Scott! I'll be missing my train. Help me mobilize these dashed animals."

Five minutes later, accompanied by the six Pekingese and bearing about him a pound of my tobacco, three pairs of my socks, and the remains of a bottle of whisky, Ukridge departed in a taxi-cab for Charing Cross Station to begin his life-work.

A plateful of bones.

Perhaps six weeks passed, six quiet Ukridgeless weeks, and then one morning I received an agitated telegram. Indeed, it was not so much a telegram as a cry of anguish. In every word of it there breathed the tortured spirit of a great man who has battled in vain against overwhelming odds. It was the sort of telegram which Job might have sent off after a lengthy session with Bildad the Shuhite :—

Come here immediately, laddie. Life and death matter, old horse. Desperate situation. Don't fail me.

It stirred me like a bugle. I caught the next train.

THE White Cottage, Sheep's Cray—destined, presumably, to become in future years an historic spot and a Mecca for dog-loving pilgrims—was a small and battered building standing near the main road to London at some distance from the village. I found it without difficulty, for Ukridge seemed to have achieved a certain celebrity in the neighbourhood; but to effect an entry was a harder task. I rapped for a full minute without result, then shouted; and I was about to conclude that Ukridge was not at home when the door suddenly opened. As I was just giving a final bang at the moment, I entered the house in a manner reminiscent of one of the Ballet Russe practising a new and difficult step.

"Sorry, old horse," said Ukridge. "Wouldn't have kept you waiting if I'd known who it was. Thought you were Gooch, the grocer—goods supplied to the value of six pounds three and a penny."

"I see."

"He keeps hounding me for his beastly money," said Ukridge, bitterly, as he led the way into the sitting-room. "It's a little hard. Upon my Sam it's a little hard. I come down here to inaugurate a vast business and do the natives a bit of good by establishing a growing industry in their midst, and the first thing you know they turn round and bite the hand that was going to feed them. I've been hampered and rattled by these blood-suckers ever since I got here. A little trust, a little sympathy, a little of the good old give-and-take spirit—that was all I asked. And what happened? They wanted a bit on account! Kept bothering me for a bit on account, I'll trouble you, just when I needed all my thoughts and all my energy and every ounce of concentration at my command for my extraordinarily difficult and delicate work. *I* couldn't give them a bit on account. Later on, if they had only exercised reasonable patience, I would no doubt have been in a position to settle their infernal bills fifty times over. But the time was not ripe. I reasoned with the men. I said, 'Here am I, a busy man, trying hard to educate six Pekingese dogs for the music-hall stage, and you come distracting my attention and impairing my efficiency by

babbling about a bit on account. It isn't the pull-together spirit,' I said. 'It isn't the spirit that wins to wealth. These narrow petty-cash ideas can never make for success.' But no, they couldn't see it. They started calling here at all hours and waylaying me in the public highways till life became an absolute curse. And now what do you think has happened ? "

"What ? "

"The dogs."

"Got distemper ? "

"No. Worse. My landlord's pinched them as security for his infernal rent ! Sneaked the stock. Tied up the assets. Crippled the business at the very outset. Have you ever in your life heard of anything so dastardly ? I know I agreed to pay the damned rent weekly and I'm about six weeks behind, but, my gosh ! surely a man with a huge enterprise on his hands isn't supposed to have to worry about these trifles when he's occupied with the most delicate—— Well, I put all that to old Nickerson, but a fat lot of good it did. So then I wired to you."

"Ah ! " I said, and there was a brief and pregnant pause.

"I thought," said Ukridge, meditatively, "that you might be able to suggest somebody I could touch."

He spoke in a detached and almost casual way, but his eye was gleaming at me significantly, and I avoided it with a sense of guilt. My finances at the moment were in their customary unsettled condition—rather more so, in fact, than usual, owing to unsatisfactory speculations at Kempton Park on the previous Saturday ; and it seemed to me that, if ever there was a time for passing the buck, this was it. I mused tensely. It was an occasion for quick thinking.

"George Tupper ! " I cried, on the crest of a brain-wave.

"George Tupper ? " echoed Ukridge, radiantly, his gloom melting like fog before the sun. "The very man, by Gad ! It's a most amazing thing, but I never thought of him. George Tupper, of course ! Big-hearted George, the old school-chum. He'll do it like a shot and won't miss the money. These Foreign Office blokes have always got a spare tenner or two tucked away in the old sock. They pinch it out of the public funds. Rush back to town, laddie, with all speed, get hold of Tuppy, lush him up, and bite his ear for twenty quid. Now is the time for all good men to come to the aid of the party."

I HAD been convinced that George Tupper would not fail us, nor did he. He parted without a murmur—even with enthusiasm. The consignment was one that might have been made to order for him. As a boy, George used to write sentimental poetry for the school magazine, and now he is the sort of man who is always starting subscription lists and getting up memorials and presentations. He listened to my story with the serious official air which these Foreign Office fellows put on when they are deciding whether to declare war on Switzerland or send a firm note to San Marino, and was reaching for his cheque-book before I had been speaking two minutes. Ukridge's sad case seemed to move him deeply.

"Too bad," said George. "So he is training dogs, is he ? Well, it seems very unfair that, if he has at last settled down to real work, he should be hampered by financial difficulties at the outset. We ought to do something practical for him. After all, a loan of twenty pounds cannot relieve the situation permanently."

"I think you're a bit optimistic if you're looking on it as a loan."

"What Ukridge needs is capital."

"He thinks that, too. So does Gooch, the grocer."

"Capital," repeated George Tupper, firmly, as if he were reasoning with the plenipotentiary of some Great Power "Every venture requires capital at first." He frowned thoughtfully. "Where can we obtain capital for Ukridge ? "

"Rob a bank."

George Tupper's face cleared.

"I have it ! " he said. "I will go straight over to Wimbledon to-night and approach his aunt."

"Aren't you forgetting that Ukridge is about as popular with her as a cold welsh rabbit ? "

"There may be a temporary estrangement, but if I tell her the facts and impress upon her that Ukridge is really making a genuine effort to earn a living——"

"Well, try it if you like. But she will probably set the parrot on to you."

"It will have to be done diplomatically, of course. It might be as well if you did not tell Ukridge what I propose to do. I do not wish to arouse hopes which may not be fulfilled."

A BLAZE of yellow on the platform of Sheep's Cray Station next morning informed me that Ukridge had come to meet my train. The sun poured down from a cloudless sky, but it took more than sunshine to make Stanley Featherstonehaugh Ukridge discard his mackintosh. He looked like an animated blob of mustard.

When the train rolled in, he was standing in solitary grandeur trying to light his pipe,

but as I got out I perceived that he had been joined by a sad-looking man, who, from the rapid and earnest manner in which he talked and the vehemence of his gesticulations, appeared to be ventilating some theme on which he felt deeply. Ukridge was looking warm and harassed, and, as I approached, I could hear his voice booming in reply.

"My dear sir, my dear old horse, do be reasonable, do try to cultivate the big, broad, flexible outlook——"

He saw me and broke away—not unwillingly: and, gripping my arm, drew me off along the platform. The sad-looking man followed irresolutely.

"Have you got the stuff, laddie?" inquired Ukridge, in a tense whisper. "Have you got it?"

"Yes, here it is."

"Put it back, put it back!" moaned Ukridge in agony, as I felt in my pocket. "Do you know who that was I was talking to? Gooch, the grocer!"

"Goods supplied to the value of six pounds three and a penny?"

"Absolutely!"

"Well, now's your chance. Fling him a purse of gold. That'll make him look silly."

"My dear old horse, I can't afford to go about the place squandering my cash simply in order to make grocers look silly. That money is earmarked for Nickerson, my landlord."

"Oh! I say, I think the six pounds three and a penny bird is following us."

"Then for goodness' sake, laddie, let's get a move on! If that man knew we had twenty quid on us, our lives wouldn't be safe. He'd make one spring."

He hurried me out of the station and led the way up a shady lane that wound off through the fields, slinking furtively "like one that on a lonesome road doth walk in fear and dread, and having once looked back walks on and turns no more his head, because he knows a frightful fiend doth close behind him tread." As a matter of fact, the frightful fiend had given up the pursuit after the first few steps, and a moment later I drew this fact to Ukridge's attention, for it was not the sort of day on which to break walking records unnecessarily.

He halted, relieved, and mopped his spacious brow with a handkerchief which I recognized as having once been my property.

"Thank goodness we've shaken him off," he said. "Not a bad chap in his way, I believe—a good husband and father, I'm told, and sings in the church choir. But no vision. That's what he lacks, old horse—vision. He can't understand that all vast industrial enterprises have been built up on a system of liberal and cheerful credit. Won't realize that credit is the life-blood of commerce. Without credit commerce has no elasticity. And if commerce has no elasticity what dam' good is it?"

"I don't know."

"Nor does anybody else. Well, now that he's gone, you can give me that money. Did old Tuppy cough up cheerfully?"

"Blithely."

"I knew it," said Ukridge, deeply moved, "I knew it. A good fellow. One of the best. I've always liked Tuppy. A man you can rely on. Some day, when I get going on a big scale, he shall have this back a thousandfold. I'm glad you brought small notes."

"Why?"

"I want to scatter 'em about on the table in front of this Nickerson blighter."

"Is this where he lives?"

We had come to a red-roofed house, set back from the road amidst trees. Ukridge wielded the knocker forcefully.

"Tell Mr. Nickerson," he said to the maid, "that Mr. Ukridge has called and would like a word."

ABOUT the demeanour of the man who presently entered the room into which we had been shown there was that subtle but well-marked something which stamps your creditor all the world over. Mr. Nickerson was a man of medium height, almost completely surrounded by whiskers, and through the shrubbery he gazed at Ukridge with frozen eyes, shooting out waves of deleterious animal magnetism. You could see at a glance that he was not fond of Ukridge. Take him for all in all, Mr. Nickerson looked like one of the less amiable prophets of the Old Testament about to interview the captive monarch of the Amalekites.

"Well?" he said, and I have never heard the word spoken in a more forbidding manner.

"I've come about the rent."

"Ah!" said Mr. Nickerson, guardedly.

"To pay it," said Ukridge.

"To pay it!" ejaculated Mr. Nickerson, incredulously.

"Here!" said Ukridge, and with a superb gesture flung money on the table.

I understood now why the massive-minded man had wanted small notes. They made a brave display. There was a light breeze blowing in through the open window, and so musical a rustling did it set up as it played about the heaped-up wealth that Mr. Nickerson's austerity seemed to vanish like breath off a razor-blade. For a moment a dazed look came into his eyes and he swayed slightly; then, as he started to gather up the money, he took

on the benevolent air of a bishop blessing pilgrims. As far as Mr. Nickerson was concerned, the sun was up.

"Why, thank you, Mr. Ukridge, I'm sure," he said. "Thank you very much. No hard feelings, I trust?"

"Not on my side, old horse," responded Ukridge, affably. "Business is business."

"Exactly."

"Well, I may as well take those dogs now," said Ukridge, helping himself to a cigar from a box which he had just discovered on the mantelpiece and putting a couple more in his pocket in the friendliest way. "The sooner they're back with me, the better. They've lost a day's education as it is."

"Why, certainly, Mr. Ukridge; certainly. They are in the shed at the bottom of the garden. I will get them for you at once."

He retreated through the door, babbling ingratiatingly.

"Amazing how fond these blokes are of money," sighed Ukridge. "It's a thing I don't like to see. Sordid, I call it. That blighter's eyes were gleaming, positively gleaming, laddie, as he scooped up the stuff. Good cigars these," he added, pocketing three more.

There was a faltering footstep outside, and Mr. Nickerson re-entered the room. The man appeared to have something on his mind. A glassy look was in his whisker-bordered eyes, and his mouth, though it was not easy to see it through the jungle, seemed to me to be sagging mournfully. He resembled a minor prophet who has been hit behind the ear with a stuffed eel-skin.

"Mr. Ukridge!"

"Hullo?"

"The—the little dogs!"

"Well?"

"The little dogs!"

"What about them?"

"They have gone!"

"Gone?"

"Run away!"

"Run away? How the devil could they run away?"

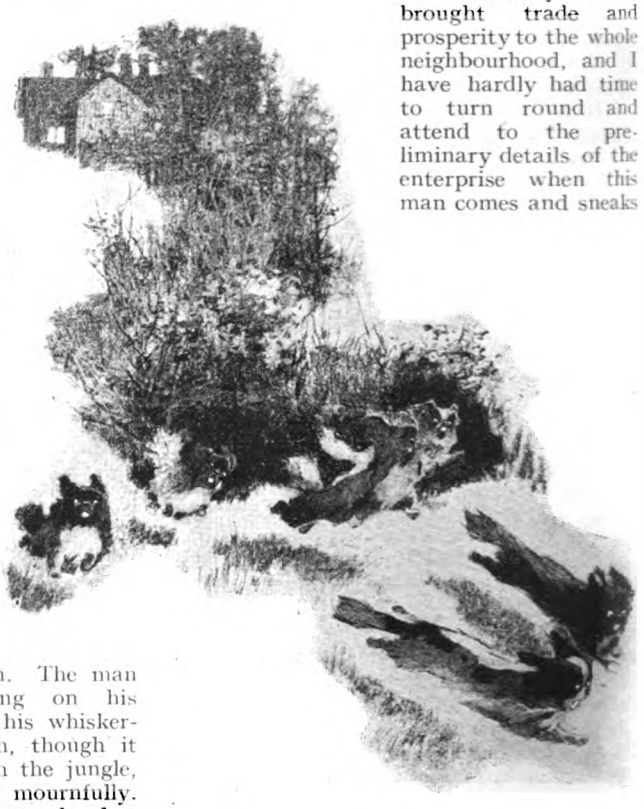
"There seems to have been a loose board at the back of the shed. The little dogs must have wriggled through. There is no trace of them to be found."

Ukridge flung up his arms despairingly. He swelled like a captive balloon. His pince-nez rocked on his nose, his mackintosh flapped menacingly, and his collar sprang off its stud. He brought his fist down with a crash on the table.

"Upon my Sam!"

"I am extremely sorry——"

"Upon my Sam!" cried Ukridge. "It's hard. It's pretty hard. I come down here to inaugurate a great business, which would eventually have brought trade and prosperity to the whole neighbourhood, and I have hardly had time to turn round and attend to the preliminary details of the enterprise when this man comes and sneaks



my dogs. And now he tells me with a light laugh——"

"Mr. Ukridge, I assure you——"

"Tells me with a light laugh that they've gone. Gone! Gone where? Why, dash it, they may be all over the county. A fat chance I've got of ever seeing them again. Six valuable Pekingese, already educated practically to the stage where they could have been sold at an enormous profit——"

Mr. Nickerson was fumbling guiltily, and now he produced from his pocket a crumpled wad of notes, which he thrust agitatedly upon Ukridge, who waved them away with loathing.

"This gentleman," boomed Ukridge, indicating me with a sweeping gesture, "happens to be a lawyer. It is extremely

lucky that he chanced to come down to-day to pay me a visit. Have you followed the proceedings closely ? "

I said I had followed them very closely.

" Is it your opinion that an action will lie ? "

I said it seemed highly probable, and this expert ruling appeared to put the final touch on Mr. Nickerson's collapse. Almost tearfully he urged the notes on Ukridge.

" What's this ? " said Ukridge, loftily.

" I—I thought, Mr. Ukridge, that, if it were agreeable to you, you might consent to take your money back, and—and consider the episode closed."

Ukridge turned to me with raised eyebrows.

" Ha ! " he cried. " Ha, ha ! "

" Ha, ha ! " I chorused, dutifully.

" He thinks that he can close the episode by giving me my money back. Isn't that rich ? "

" Fruity," I agreed.

" Those dogs were worth hundreds of pounds, and he thinks he can square me with a rotten twenty. Would you have believed it if you hadn't heard it with your own ears, old horse ? "

" Never ! "

" I'll tell you what I'll do," said Ukridge, after thought. " I'll take this money." Mr. Nickerson thanked him. " And there are one or two trifling accounts which want

"I borrowed a dead cat and tied a string to it. Great run while it lasted. Hounds picked up the scent right away and started off at fifty miles an hour. Cat and I doing a steady fifty-five."

settling with some of the local tradesmen. You will square those——"

"Certainly, Mr. Ukridge, certainly."

"And after that—well, I'll have to think it over. If I decide to institute proceedings my lawyer will communicate with you in due course."

And we left the wretched man, cowering despicably behind his whiskers.

IT seemed to me, as we passed down the tree-shaded lane and out into the white glare of the road, that Ukridge was bearing himself in his hour of disaster with a rather admirable fortitude. His stock-in-trade, the life-blood of his enterprise, was scattered all over Kent, probably never to return, and all that he had to show on the other side of the balance-sheet was the cancelling of a few weeks' back rent and the paying-off of Gooch, the grocer, and his friends. It was a situation which might well have crushed the spirit of an ordinary man, but Ukridge seemed by no means dejected. Jaunty, rather. His eyes shone behind their pince-nez and he whistled a rollicking air. When presently he began to sing, I felt that it was time to create a diversion.

"What are you going to do?" I asked.

"Who, me?" said Ukridge, buoyantly. "Oh, I'm coming back to town on the next train. You don't mind hoofing it to the next station, do you? It's only five miles. It might be a trifle risky to start from Sheep's Cray."

"Why risky?"

"Because of the dogs, of course."

"Dogs?"

Ukridge hummed a gay strain.

"Oh, yes. I forgot to tell you about that. I've got 'em."

"What?"

"Yes. I went out late last night and pinched them out of the shed." He chuckled amusedly. "Perfectly simple. Only needed a clear, level head. I borrowed a dead cat and tied a string to it, legged it to old Nickerson's garden after dark, dug a board out of the back of the shed, and shoved my head down and chirruped. The dogs came trickling out, and I hared off, towing old Colonel Cat on his string. Great run while it lasted, laddie. Hounds picked up the scent right away and started off in a bunch at fifty miles an hour. Cat and I doing a steady fifty-five. Thought every minute old Nickerson would hear and start blazing away with a gun, but nothing happened. I led the pack across country for a run of twenty minutes without a check, parked the dogs in my sitting-room, and so to bed. Took it out of me, by gosh! Not so young as I was."

I was silent for a moment, conscious of a feeling almost of reverence. This man was undoubtedly spacious. There had always been something about Ukridge that dulled the moral sense.

"Well," I said at length, "you've certainly got vision."

"Yes?" said Ukridge, gratified.

"*And* the big, broad, flexible outlook."

"Got to, laddie, nowadays. The foundation of a successful business career."

"And what's the next move?"

WE were drawing near to the White Cottage. It stood and broiled in the sunlight, and I hoped that there might be something cool to drink inside it. The window of the sitting-room was open, and through it came the yapping of Pekingese.

"Oh, I shall find another cottage somewhere else," said Ukridge, eyeing his little home with a certain sentimentality. "That won't be hard. Lots of cottages all over the place. And then I shall buckle down to serious work. You'll be astounded at the progress I've made already. In a minute I'll show you what those dogs can do."

"They can bark all right."

"Yes. They seem excited about something. You know, laddie, I've had a great idea. When I saw you at your rooms my scheme was to specialize in performing dogs for the music-halls—what you might call professional dogs. But I've been thinking it over, and now I don't see why I shouldn't go in for developing amateur talent as well. Say you have a dog—Fido, the household pet—and you think it would brighten the home if he could do a few tricks from time to time. Well, you're a busy man, you haven't the time to give up to teaching him. So you just tie a label to his collar and ship him off for a month to the Ukridge Dog College, and back he comes, thoroughly educated. No trouble, no worry, easy terms. Upon my Sam, I'm not sure there isn't more money in the amateur branch than in the professional. I don't see why eventually dog owners shouldn't send their dogs to me as a regular thing, just as they send their sons to Eton and Winchester. My golly! this idea's beginning to develop. I'll tell you what—how would it be to issue special collars to all dogs which have graduated from my college? Something distinctive which everybody would recognize. See what I mean? Sort of badge of honour. Fellow with a dog entitled to wear the Ukridge collar would be in a position to look down on the bloke whose dog hadn't got one. Gradually it would get so that anybody in a decent social position

would be ashamed to be seen out with a non-Ukridge dog. The thing would become a landslide. Dogs would pour in from all corners of the country. More work than I could handle. Have to start branches. The scheme's colossal. Millions in it, my boy! Millions!" He paused with his fingers on the handle of the front door. "Of course," he went on, "just at present it's no good blinking the fact that I'm hampered and handicapped by lack of funds and can only approach the thing on a small scale. What it amounts to, laddie, is that somehow or other I've got to get capital."

It seemed the moment to spring the glad news.

"I promised him I wouldn't mention it," I said, "for fear it might lead to disappointment, but as a matter of fact George Tupper is trying to raise some capital for you. I left him last night starting out to get it."

"George Tupper!" Ukridge's eyes dimmed with a not unmanly emotion. "George Tupper! By Gad, that fellow is the salt of the earth. Good, loyal fellow! A true friend. A man you can rely on. Upon my Sam, if there were more fellows about like old Tuppy, there wouldn't be all this modern pessimism and unrest. Did he seem to have any idea where he could raise a bit of capital for me?"

"Yes. He went round to tell your aunt about your coming down here to train those Pekes, and—— What's the matter?"

A fearful change had come over Ukridge's jubilant front. His eyes bulged, his jaw sagged. With the addition of a few feet of grey whiskers he would have looked exactly like the recent Mr. Nickerson.

"My aunt?" he mumbled, swaying on the door-handle.

"Yes. What's the matter? He thought, if he told her all about it, she might relent and rally round."

A fearful change had come over Ukridge. His eyes bulged, his jaw sagged.

The sigh of a gallant fighter at the end of his strength forced its way up from Ukridge's mackintosh-covered bosom.

"Of all the dashed, infernal, officious, meddling, muddling, fat-headed, interfering asses," he said, wanly, "George Tupper is the worst."

"What do you mean?"

"The man oughtn't to be at large. He's a public menace."

"But——"

"Those dogs *belong* to my aunt. I pinched them when she chucked me out!"

Inside the cottage the Pekingese were still yapping industriously.

"Upon my Sam," said Ukridge, "it's a little hard."

I think he would have said more, but at this point a voice spoke with a sudden and awful abruptness from the interior of the cottage. It was a woman's voice, a quiet, steely voice, a voice, it seemed to me, that suggested cold eyes, a beaky nose, and hair like gun-metal.

"Stanley!"

That was all it said, but it was enough. Ukridge's eye met mine in a wild surmise. He seemed to shrink into his mackintosh like a snail surprised while eating lettuce.

"Stanley!"

"Yes, Aunt Julia?" quavered Ukridge.

"Come here. I wish to speak to you."

"Yes, Aunt Julia."

I SIDLED out into the road. Inside the cottage the yapping of the Pekingese had become quite hysterical. I found myself trotting, and then—though it was a warm day—running quite rapidly. I could have stayed if I had wanted to, but somehow I did not want to. Something seemed to tell me that on this holy domestic scene I should be an intruder.

What it was that gave me that impression I do not know—probably vision or the big, broad, flexible outlook.

(Another amusing adventure of Stanley Featherstonehaugh Ukridge will appear next month.)

THE TERRIBLE HOBBY OF SIR JOSEPH LONDE, BART.—2.

THE TERROR OF ELTON LODGE

BY

E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM

ILLUSTRATED BY S. SEYMOUR LUCAS

COLONEL SIR FRANCIS WORTON, K.C.B., D.S.O., officially known amongst professional intimates, since the formal inauguration of his new Department, as Q 20, stood before the open window of Daniel Rocke's office, looking out across the incongruous medley of roof-tops, chimneys, and sky signs. A sudden burst of spring had deluged the city with sunshine. Daffodils and mimosa were being sold at the street corners, the sky was of summer blue, across which drifted lazily fleecy little fragments of white cloud.

"If I were anybody in the world but my unlucky self," he sighed, "I should take a long week-end and play golf at Rye. Upsetting weather, this!"

Daniel glanced out of the window without enthusiasm.

"Beastly treacherous," he muttered. "The east wind may come back to-morrow."

"Pessimist!" his Chief scoffed. "By the by, Dan, that's a ripping good-looking typist of yours."

"Is she?" Daniel answered, coldly. "I can't say I ever noticed her particularly."

Q 20 swung round and looked at his friend.

"Liver or the blues?" he inquired.

"Both," was the prompt acknowledgment. "I want some work."

"There's plenty doing," Worton replied, "only I don't want to set you fishing for minnows. I like to keep you comfortably in the background for the big fish. There's plenty doing, of course. Anarchy and love-making both flourish in the spring."

"All the same, you didn't walk across the Park to come and see me at this time of the morning for nothing, did you?" Daniel persisted.

"I did not," his visitor admitted.

"Get along with it, then. I've done nothing but cipher and decoding work for ages. I can't stand any more of it."

"The affair to which I am about to allude," Q 20 remarked, cautiously, "does not come within the sphere of our professional activities. You, however, are a free lance. It might interest you."

"Proceed," Daniel begged.

"This remarkably good-looking secretary of yours—let me see, what did you say her name was?"

"I'm not aware that I mentioned it," Daniel answered, stiffly. "It is, as a matter of fact, Lancaster—Miss Ann Lancaster."

"Know anything of her antecedents?"

"I know of a very tragic incident in her life. She is the daughter of the man who was murdered by that lunatic Londe."

Q 20 whistled softly.

"The fellow who nearly did you in! The girl got you out of a tight place, didn't she?"

"I have always considered myself indebted to Miss Lancaster for her services on that occasion," Daniel acknowledged, with some reserve.

"Then you'd better ask her what she means by dining in the Ronico Grill Room with a well-known criminal," his friend suggested, "a man who is badly wanted by Scotland Yard, as a matter of fact."

Daniel was amazingly perturbed.

"Dining alone with him?" he demanded.

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O 20 nodded.

"We don't make mistakes," he said, a little coldly. "I suppose I ought to give Scotland Yard the tip, but I'm not going to just at present. I have an idea that the young man is in touch, or getting into touch, with my little lot."

"Has this been going on for long?" Daniel asked.

"About a fortnight. I can tell you all about it, for I was having the young man closely shadowed at the time. They met at a tea-shop. He sent a card over to her. She was on the point of tearing it up when she seemed to change her mind. She examined the card more closely, put it in her bag, looked across at the man, and smiled. These women are the devil," Worton went on, with a sigh. "Scarcely lifts her eyes when I wish her the most respectful 'Good morning.'"

"And since then?"

"She's dined with him at least three times, always in the Ronico Grill. Once she went to the cinema afterwards. They were there on Tuesday. When they came out, they stood talking in the street for nearly ten minutes. He seemed to be trying to persuade her to go somewhere."

"The devil!" Daniel exclaimed, with cold fury.

"She went off home by herself all right," O 20 reassured him—"Girls' Hostel in Sydney Street, Westminster. All right up to now, I should say, but she's flirting with danger. Look into it, Dan, and find out what that young man is up to. He's a bad lot and I want him."

Colonel Sir Francis Worton picked up his grey Homburg hat, his stick, and his gloves.

"I am always to be found at the club after hours," he concluded. "Keep in touch with me, there's a good fellow."

DANIEL, distinctly disturbed and ill at ease, bade his friend a somewhat incoherent farewell. The door of the outer office had scarcely closed before he rang the bell. Ann appeared at once. He swung round in his chair and looked at her. For the first time he seemed to realize how little he actually knew of his new secretary. Her quietness of demeanour, her habit of reserved speech, all made for secrecy. She stood just where a little flood of sunshine, which had so disturbed his previous visitor, sought out the beauty of her dark brown hair, with its threads and splashes of gold. She stood waiting attentively, a notebook and pencil in her hand.

"You rang, sir," she reminded him.

Daniel pulled himself together.

"Won't you sit down for a moment, Miss Lancaster?" he invited.

She hesitated and then obeyed him.

"I am aware," he went on, a little stiffly, "that is it not customary to interfere with the private life of one's assistants, but I have this morning received information of a somewhat distressing character."

"About me?" Ann inquired.

"About you. I am told that you are in the habit of dining with a well-known criminal, a man whom you met by chance in a tea-room."

Ann's attitude towards the accusation was distinctly unexpected. A light of positive pleasure flashed in her soft brown eyes, her lips parted in an eager smile.

"Is he really a criminal?" she demanded.

"I have it on the best authority," was the curt reply.

"Then I have not been wasting my time," she declared, with a sigh of satisfaction.

Daniel looked at her for a moment in blank surprise.

"Perhaps you would care to explain?" he suggested.

"Willingly," she answered. "You have become immersed in other interests and you have forgotten the man who came within five seconds of taking your life. I have never forgotten my father's murderer."

"You mean to say that you are on his track?" Daniel demanded, incredulously.

"That is my hope," she assented. "It is quite true that I made this man's acquaintance in a tea-room. He sent me over a card on which was scribbled an impertinent message. I was on the point of tearing it up when I saw that the name printed upon it had been crossed out. Even then I fancied that I could read it. Now, in the clear light, it is quite legible."

She drew a crumpled card from a letter-case in her pocket and handed it to him. He held it up to the light. A little exclamation broke from his lips.

"Sir Joseph Londe!" he cried.

She nodded.

"When I found," she went on, "that the young man who sought to make my acquaintance was in possession of cards bearing that name—well, I encouraged him. I have dined with him two or three times and been to the cinema with him."

"Have you ever referred to Londe?" Daniel inquired.

"Certainly not," she answered. "He is very clever. I am not in the least surprised to hear that he is a criminal. The very fact that he is a bad character makes it all the more likely that he may be connected in some way with that man."

"Has he disclosed any design with regard to you, other than flirtation?" Daniel asked.

"He is working up to it," Ann answered, eagerly. "He is always admiring my hair.

At first I took no notice of it, but he has been so persistent that I became suspicious. Only the other night, he asked me if anything would induce me to have it cut off and sell it."

"For what purpose?"

"He said something about a wealthy woman who seems to be connected with his uncle, somehow or other," she replied. "Anyway, his uncle appears to be the intermediary. I laughed at him, but I am quite sure that there is something at the back of his mind."

"Nothing that he has ever said has suggested the existence of Londe, I suppose?"

"I am not sure," she reflected. "He has spoken once or twice of a very wealthy uncle—a professional man."

"When do you see him again?"

"I am dining with him to-night."

"At Ronico's again?"

She shook her head.

"No! To-night we are going to Imano's. I think his idea is that it will be more intimate."

Daniel frowned. He was utterly unable to account for a certain irritation which betrayed itself at once in his tone.

"You seem to find his society amusing, anyhow."

"I try to," she confessed, simply. "I am hoping every time that he may give me the clue."

"And do you propose, may I ask," he went on, "to proceed with these investigations yourself?"

"Not necessarily. If you can suggest any form of intervention, I should be only too glad to share the responsibility," she assured him.

"Before this evening," Daniel promised, "I will collect a little more information about this young man. What does he call himself?"

"Mr. Leopold Greatson."

"Good-looking?" Daniel asked, querulously.

"Of his type," she admitted; "tall, with small military black moustache and very black eyes."

"Good manners?"

"On the surface," she answered, after a moment's hesitation.

"Voice?"

"Also a little artificial."

Daniel showed signs of cheering up.

"Don't leave without seeing me this evening," he enjoined. "I'll have his *dossier* by then."

She shivered a little.

"Don't show it to me," she begged, "or I shall be afraid to go near him."

Daniel smiled in peculiar fashion.

"You will not be alone," he promised.

MISS ANN LANCASTER, seated at one of the small balcony tables upstairs at Imano's, looking quite at her best, and with a great bunch of violets by the side of her plate, tried to persuade herself that she was enjoying her dinner. Her companion was, in his way, sufficiently good-looking and was certainly attentive. The dinner was the best the place could afford; a gold-topped bottle reposed in ice by their side and an excellent little orchestra was discoursing soft and pleasant music. Most of the concomitants of a pleasant evening were there, yet a queer feeling had come to Ann. For the first time in her life she knew fear. Every now and then her companion leaned across the table towards her to whisper words of admiration. Each time she smiled back at him, but each time it became more difficult. Whenever he dropped his voice she felt inclined to shriek, and he dropped it more and more often as the dinner drew to a close. While they were waiting for their coffee, he moved his chair and leaned across until their heads nearly touched.

"Ann——," he began.

"I have not given you permission to call me Ann," she interrupted.

"You soon will," he continued, "very soon indeed, I hope, after you have heard what I have to say. First of all, I will make a confession. I have spoken to you three or four times of my uncle. He is not my uncle at all."

"You mean the rich old misanthrope who wants my hair?" Ann demanded.

He nodded.

"I think that he is a little mad," he confided. "I will tell you the truth about the matter. He has a wife whom no one ever sees, whose hair he believes to be perfectly white, although as a matter of fact it is exactly the same colour as your own. She had a shock some time ago. All the while he is looking for someone with exactly your coloured hair. He is a clever man—a scientist, they say—but he is mad. He thinks that he will be able to graft the hair on to his wife's head, and that, when she sees her hair the right colour again, she will recover her health and spirits."

"What an extraordinary story!" Ann murmured.

"It is true—I give you my word that it is true," the young man assured her earnestly. "Now I will tell you something else. I told you that he would give a hundred pounds for your hair. He will give more—he will give a great deal more. When I first talked to you about it, I thought of nothing except to make something for myself. Now I know you better, I have another idea. Let us take all that he will give and go abroad together. We can be

She drew a crumpled card from a letter-case in her pocket and handed it to him.

married—you can trust me, I promise that—and we can go to a little place in the south-west of France that I know of. I could practise there as a doctor. I took my degree all right, but I never had the money to set up. Your hair will grow there quite quickly, and you will be away from everybody. What do you think of my plan ? "

" I don't know," Ann confessed. " You never told me that you were a doctor."

" I am a doctor, but there was some trouble when I was an assistant to a man in the East-end," he explained. " You see, I am quite honest with you. I should find it difficult to practise in this country. Abroad it would be all right, and with the thousand pounds——"

' You mean to say that this man is going to give a thousand pounds for my hair ? " she interrupted.

The young man looked annoyed. His mouth moved sideways—an ugly trick he had at times.

" I was coming to that," he said. " Yes, he will give a thousand pounds."

" What is his name ? " Ann asked.

" Warking — Dr. Joseph Warking."

" What is he like ? "

" A quaint-looking cove of medium height, dark and with massive shoulders. Looks very clever. Honestly, I know very little about him, but I know that he means business about that thousand pounds. I've taken two girls there before you, but their hair was much lighter than yours and he turned them down directly. The money was in his desk waiting, though."

"How are you sure that mine is the right colour?" she persisted.

"I've seen his wife," he explained. "The colour of her hair, although he believes it to be white, is precisely the same as yours."

"Why doesn't he advertise, or come out and look for someone himself?" Ann demanded.

"I told you he was a quaint sort of cove with his silly delusions," her companion replied, "but he's quainter than you'd believe. He's hired a gloomy old house the other side of Putney Common—took it furnished from the executors of a doctor who died there. I arranged the whole matter for him, and, if you believe me, he hasn't been out of that house since the first day he arrived in it—out of the grounds, I should say," he corrected himself. "He does play about at a little gardening at times—talks about making a rock garden."

Ann clutched at the tablecloth. For a moment the atmosphere of the place, her companion, the busy forms of the waiters, seemed all fantastic and unreal. She heard the sobbing of the night wind in the pine trees, and saw Daniel Rocke coming along the shadowy path, side by side with the woman with the strange eyes. She no longer had any doubt.

"Well, what do you think of my scheme?" the young man asked, after a little pause.

"It sounds all right," Ann admitted. "Only—I am not sure that I know you well enough."

"Since I saw you that day in the tea-shop," he declared, impressively, "I have never looked at any other girl—that's straight. You can trust me. I haven't many friends, but the few I can introduce you to will tell you that Leopold Greatson can be trusted. Honour bright, I never saw a girl come anywhere near you! What I'd like to do," he went on, confidentially, "is to touch the money this very night and clear right away. Are you game for that, Ann?"

"I don't know, I'm sure," she answered. "I shall look a horrid sight without any hair."

"Don't you believe it," the young man rejoined, emphatically. "You can wear a hat most of the time, and one of those fussy little boudoir caps in the house. You'll look all right for me, Ann—I promise you that. It will be fine to get out of this country, too," he went on. "I don't seem to be able to do any good here at anything. When you've once been in trouble, it's so jolly difficult to get going again."

"Do you want me to visit this strange friend of yours to-night, then?" she asked.

"I should like to start off to see him in ten minutes," was the prompt reply. "I'm all the time afraid that he'll change his mind, or that someone else will come along with your coloured hair."

"How far away is it?"

"Three or four miles."

"Tell me exactly where it is," Ann persisted.

"It's a house called Elton Lodge—an old-fashioned place near the Portsmouth Road," he confided. "It would take us about twenty-five minutes in a taxi. He's got the money waiting there in notes! We might have a little supper afterwards, to celebrate and make our plans."

"Idiot!" she exclaimed. "I should have to arrange something for my head before I could wear a hat, even."

"All the more reason for getting right away at once," he argued, eagerly.

"Well, we'll talk about that afterwards," Ann promised. "Anyhow, I am willing to go and see your eccentric friend."

"You'll come there now with me, then?"

Ann nodded.

"I suppose so," she sighed. "I'm tired of typing. And a thousand pounds! I sha'n't believe it until I feel the notes in my hand."

He called for the bill and, while the waiter was bringing it, dropped his voice almost to a whisper.

"Ann," he pleaded, "you'll play the game? You won't pinch the thousand and then have nothing more to do with yours truly? You'll act on the square?"

"Yes," Ann assured him, "I'll act on the square."

The young man received and paid his bill. Ann rose to her feet with a little grimace.

"I'll fetch my coat and have one last look at my hair," she murmured, as she disappeared from view.

IN the dreary library of a large, dilapidated house a man sat at a writing-table, motionless, apparently idle. There were patches of damp upon the walls, half of the shelves with which the room had been lined had been torn down, the few books that remained were mouldy and damp to the touch. The carpet had been taken up and replaced with a temporary drugget. Even the fire which burned in the grate seemed made of green logs, which sizzled and spluttered and gave out little heat. Most of the electric fittings in the room had been dismantled. One lamp alone stood upon the desk, unshaded and glaring. The face of the man seemed relentlessly framed in its circle of white light—a strange, powerful face, sallow and sombre, clean-shaven, with black hair in which was no streak of grey. He had the air of a man waiting there for a purpose, idle yet attentive. Suddenly his whole expression changed. From outside

"Since I saw you that day in the tea-shop," he declared, impressively, "I have never looked at any other girl—that's straight. You can trust me."

came the sound of the swinging of a gate, the noise of a taxicab, the flash of its lamps passing the window. A strange, almost a beautiful smile parted his lips for a moment. He half-rose to his feet, eagerly. Then he resumed his place and waited.

There followed the sound of footsteps in the stone hall outside. The door of the room was opened, and the visitors entered. The man who had been waiting rose to his feet.

"I have brought the young lady, sir," Leopold Greatson announced. "She is a little frightened. I think she'd like you to explain the matter to her."

Ann raised her eyes and gave a start. The man whom she had come to see was not even looking at her. His eyes were fixed greedily upon her hair.

"Take off your hat, please," he begged.

She obeyed. He gave a little sigh of relief as the garish light shone upon the misty film of gold with its darker background.

"My dear young lady," he said, "your hair is wonderful. It is precisely the shade for which I have been seeking. This young man has, I trust, informed you of my offer?"

"He has," she answered.

Leopold Greatson came up to the table, almost pushing his way past Ann.

"In a sense, although it's not my hair, we are partners in this," he declared. "We want the money before the hair is touched."

The prospective purchaser produced his pocket-book.

"It is your wish?" he asked Ann.

"No!" she answered.

Leopold Greatson struck the table with his fist.

"It was a bargain," he declared, thickly.

"It was no bargain," Ann retorted. "I wanted to be brought here. I listened to what you had to say, but I promised nothing."

There was a curious light in the older man's eyes—almost a twinkle.

"I shall pay the money when the hair is mine," he pronounced. "There is the commission I promised," he added, drawing a note from his pocket-book. "You had better go and leave the young lady alone with me. We can finish our business together."

Greatson pocketed the note ungraciously.

"You're backing out, then?" he complained, turning to Ann. "Mind, it wasn't the money only. I'd taken a fancy to you."

She waved him away. Her gesture was insignificant, but he understood that he was a thing of no account. The girl's eyes seldom left the face of the man whom she had come to visit.

"Don't you want me to take you home?" Leopold Greatson persisted.

"I never want to see you again," she replied.

He went out grumbling, and slammed the door behind him. The sound of the echoes seemed to awaken a sense of loneliness for the first time in Ann's mind. She had the courage of a lioness, and her trust in Daniel was immense, but she suddenly realized that she was alone with a lunatic and a murderer.

"I am glad to get rid of that young man," her companion remarked, cheerfully. "I do not know why, but he displeases me. Ah! Now you are going to see why I am parting with all this money—for your hair."

A DOOR on the farther side of the room had opened. Fear crept into Ann's heart as she saw the new-comer—a tall, slim woman, pale-faced, with strange, large eyes, and hair as beautiful as her own. She was wearing the uniform of a nurse. She seemed, somehow or other, a handmaiden of Death.

"Is everything prepared?" the man asked.

"Everything is ready," was the quiet reply.

A momentary passion drove the fear from Ann's heart. The sight of the woman in her nurse's garb was illuminative. She knew now, beyond the shadow of doubt, that she had found her father's murderer. She rose to her feet.

"Listen, both of you!" she exclaimed. "Do you know who I am?"

"I am more interested," he assured her, gently, "in the colour of your hair."

"I am Ann Lancaster," she proclaimed, her eyes blazing. "I am the daughter of the man you murdered! I am here not to sell my hair, but because, through it, I have tracked you down! Do you hear that?"

He smiled at her benignly.

"Well, well, that really doesn't matter, does it?" he answered, soothingly. "I remember your father now perfectly—a most amiable man, but, alas! I am afraid, a coward. The fuss he made about parting with a little of his brain was quite pitiable. You remember, Esther?" he added, turning to the woman who was standing by his side like a wraith.

"Quite well," she admitted. "He gave us a great deal of trouble."

"And, after all," Londe sighed, "he was useless. His brain was a very poor affair. Now, the young man who behaved so badly to us—Daniel Rocke, I think his name was—he, I feel sure, would have been a most satisfactory subject."

A fierce curiosity conquered for a moment Ann's terror.

"What did you expect to get from these people?" she demanded.

"A very intelligent question," Londe answered, approvingly. "You see, my wife here and I—she wasn't my wife then—were right up to the line in France and Belgium for many, many months. I lived with a knife in my hand, and she with bandages. Night and day we were there. If I sought a moment's sleep, I was awakened by the screaming—and they came and fetched me. We were short of anæsthetics. We were short of everything. Blood—you never saw anything like it! We lived in it, and, somehow or other, a drop of it got into my brain. I went to a physician. I knew it was there because I could see it with the X-rays. He told me that nothing would cure me but to find another brain of the same formation as mine, but a natural colour, and remove a small portion of it to take the place of the discoloured part of my own. I dare say it was good advice, but I couldn't find another brain that hadn't got a similar smudge of red in it. I tried two subjects, as you know. The third was too selfish. People misunderstood us, so we had to go away. Then there came the question of this exchange of hair. My wife was afraid that you would be like these cowardly men and make difficulties about it. Directly I saw you, though, I knew there was no fear of that."

Ann's hand went instinctively to her head.

"What do you mean?" she demanded.

He smiled.

"I am a very clever man," he confided; "a great scientist. I know better than to try and cut your hair off and have a hairdresser deal with it. What I shall do—it will be a very interesting operation—I shall take the scalp with it and graft it on to my wife's head. Then your hair will grow just as it is growing now."

"It is exactly the colour mine was," the woman murmured, looking fixedly at Ann; "exactly the colour mine seems even now to me. It will be wonderful."

The hideous sense of unreality which had enveloped Ann began to pass away. The consciousness of her imminent danger, however, was no more consoling. She was alone, and in the power of two lunatics.

"What about me—after you have taken my—my hair?" she faltered.

The man smiled.

"That is all arranged for," he answered, consolingly. "You remember my little rock garden at Dredley? I have started something similar here. It is really a very retired spot, although we are so near the highway."

She sat perfectly silent, incredulous, stupefied. The calm explanation, the entire air of reasonableness, baffled all comment. She sat like a numbed being, but more than anything else in the world she prayed for Daniel Rocke.

"Everything is ready in the operating room," the woman announced, calmly.

Her husband rose to his feet and glanced expectantly towards Ann. Suddenly they heard the sound of hasty footsteps in the hall. The door was opened and closed. Leopold Greatson, a little out of breath, stood facing them. His patron frowned.

"Why have you come back?" he demanded.

"There's something up outside!" the young man cried. "As I passed the corner of Rochampton Lane, I met a police van coming up. I stopped and came back. There are seven of them. They've got the house surrounded. A man saw me and came up—might have been a gentleman. 'Where's the girl you brought up here?' he asked. I told him I'd left her here. 'Fetch her back and take her away,' he ordered, 'and you'll do yourself a bit of good.' That isn't exactly what he said, but it's near to the sense of it. Come on, young lady. I don't understand this hair-dealing business. We'll vamoose."

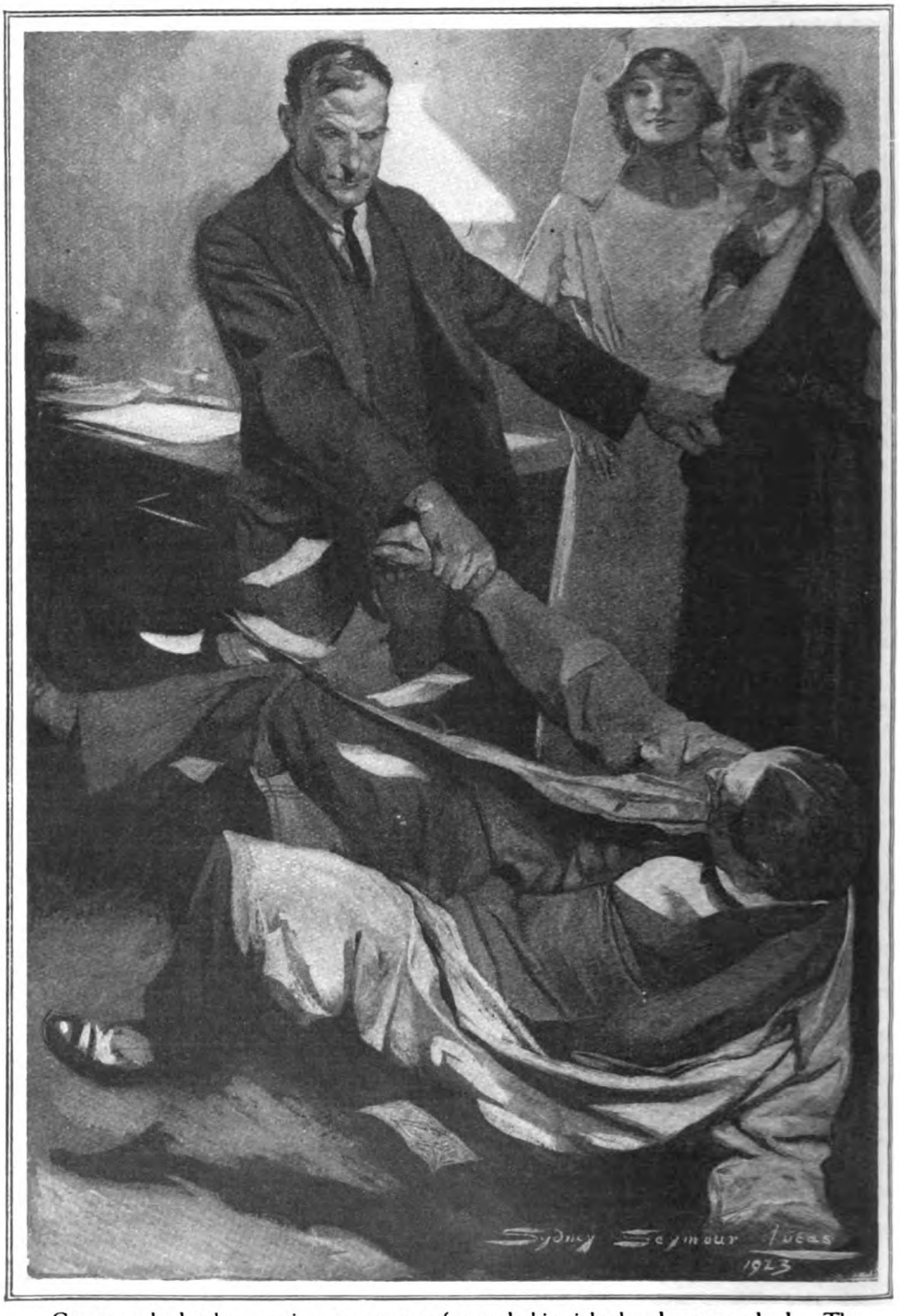
Ann rose eagerly to her feet. The man who had called himself "Dr. Warking" appeared curiously unperturbed.

"I wonder, Greatson, whether I dare entrust you with a considerable sum of money?" he said, drawing a great bundle of notes from his pocket. "I have no doubt that this is merely a friendly call, but——"

SOME instinct prompted Ann to call out, but she was too late. Greatson had taken an impetuous step forward, his right hand outstretched. The other seized it in a grip cruel as the bite of a vice, swung him round with amazing strength, and brought him crashing to the floor. Breathlessly, Ann looked upon a feat which she would never have believed possible—she saw Greatson lifted on to the other man's back and carried from the room. Then, before she had realized her danger, her own time came. The woman, who had moved to her side, suddenly held her with a strangling clasp.

"Keep quiet," she ordered, in the tone of a nurse soothing her patient. "Just sniff this—that's right. Now keep still."

The minutes which passed seemed for ever afterwards to be one of Ann's most hideous memories. She found herself, in those first moments of realization, lying back in an easy-chair, conscious, yet with a strange sense of powerlessness. She tried to move, and fell down. Her arms, her



Greatson had taken an impetuous step forward, his right hand outstretched. The other seized it in a grip cruel as the bite of a vice, swung him round with amazing strength, and brought him crashing to the floor.

legs, even the muscles of her neck when she tried to turn her head, seemed atrophied. She heard stealthy footsteps around the house. She even heard the front door open and close. She tried to remember the brief space of time immediately following the moment when that long, thin arm had clasped her neck—and tried in vain. She was all the time conscious of some unfamiliarity with regard to herself, something she failed to realize but which gave her a strange feeling of imperfect identity. The seconds ticked on. Then at last came a steady hammering at the front door, a sound which went echoing through the house. There was no reply. The hammering was repeated. Then there was the sound of the door being burst open, footsteps in the bare, stone-flagged hall, the eager entrance of someone into the room. Daniel Rocke stood there, a revolver in his hand.

"Here's the woman!" he called out. "Keep your line across the hall."

Ann tried to speak. Her lips were feeble, the sound almost inarticulate. She moved her head slightly, however, and Daniel gave a great cry.

"They've done us!" he shouted, springing backwards. "After the taxi, Thomas! Never mind the house. After the taxi!"

Ann was still bewildered. Then, looking down at herself, she suddenly realized what that sense of imperfect identity meant. Vague, half-stifled recollections, lingering in the back of her mind as though they belonged to some former life, suddenly became insistent. She was wearing a nurse's uniform. She remembered the slipping of her own gown on to the floor.

COLONEL SIR FRANCIS WORTON was a little depressed about the whole affair—also a little bored. He had enjoyed immensely the three days' holiday in which he had afterwards indulged, and on his return he would have preferred to have talked golf.

"The affair, my dear Daniel," he said, "can only be termed unfortunate. I admit that you were perhaps bound to call in Scotland Yard, but you might at least have insisted upon a more skilful organizer for your little venture. There you were, a dozen presumably intelligent men, entirely fooled by a couple of lunatics."

"On paper I know it sounds ridiculous," Daniel admitted. "On the other hand, you must remember that a lunatic of the Londe type, who suffers from one obsession at a time and is sane on every other point, is the most difficult person in the world to get hold of. He's as strong as a lion, too. He carried that young man upstairs before he changed clothes with him."

"Personally," Q 20 remarked, "I think that Miss Lancaster is one of the luckiest persons I know. With all due deference to you, Daniel, she should never have been allowed to run such a risk."

"You can't use the word 'allow' when you talk about Miss Lancaster," Daniel replied, irritably. "She does what she wants to, and that's all there is about it. That part of the affair was entirely her own planning. I could not have kept her from going to Elton Lodge unless I had held her back by force."

"The whole affair is very unfortunate," his companion repeated. "The young man Leopold Greatson was most interesting to us. Through him, I am quite sure that in a week or two we should have found where these three lost Russians were hiding. Scotland Yard has really got nothing against him worth bringing him into court for. He'll get six or eight months at the worst, and when he comes out he will have lost touch with the present situation. Upon my word, though, she's a good-looking girl. I'm almost sorry I put you on your guard."

"Don't talk rubbish!" Daniel rejoined, testily. "She might have met with a horrible death."

"You think that Londe was really in earnest, then?"

"He was in earnest about the two men he murdered to get at their brains," Daniel reminded his Chief. "There was the operating table all ready in the bathroom, too, the proper knives laid out, and two or three surgical books dealing with the scalp."

Q 20 shivered a little and threw away his cigarette.

"You may have lost Greatson," Daniel continued, "but your tip to me probably prevented another hideous murder."

"Right, Daniel, as usual," his friend admitted. "I regret nothing. Only—next time you get on the track of that man Londe, let me take a hand."

There was a glitter in Daniel's eye which was almost bloodthirsty. This was in the days when he was full of self-confidence.

"The next time," he declared, "will be the last!"

(*Next month: "The House on Salisbury Plain."*)

STAGE KISSES

BY

A.B.Walkley

ILLUSTRATED BY A K MACDONALD

DOES any old playgoer remember the third act of "Frou-Frou"? The frivolous heroine and her "flirt," M. de Valréas, were rehearsing their little amateur comedietta when they came to the stage direction (*He kisses her*). "Oh, we'll skip that part," says the lady, to the chagrin of the gentleman, who had only undertaken the theatricals for the sake of that part. She was obdurate, however, and the rehearsal came to an abrupt end. They were amateur actors, you see, and assumed that stage kisses were to be exchanged in real earnest; had they been professionals they would have known better. For the professional actor will assure you that there is no actual kissing on the stage. You only make believe to kiss the lady, holding yourself in fact at a respectful distance from her lips. It may be that in the ecstasy of a real kiss the actors would be in danger of forgetting their parts. It may be that a real kiss between two people who are not in love with one another, but only pretending to be, offers no attractions. Yet, I think, the sacrifice might be made, if only for the sake of stage illusion. To see a gentleman rapturously kissing the air at a foot or so away from his beloved is a startling reminder that the theatre is the home of unrealities.

Of course, the difficulty may be "turned." I have seen a couple embracing in a Paris theatre, with the lady's back to the house. Their lips, for all you could see, may never have met. But the lady had a most expressive back. It shivered in such a way that you were quite convinced. Another realistic impression of a kiss, with or without the reality, was given in the first act of Sir Arthur Pinero's "Iris." Two lovers were seated on a sofa "up stage," with its back to the audience and only their heads showing above it. At a moment when they were left by themselves there occurred a clever bit of expressive "business." Simultaneously the two heads rolled together. Not a word passed, only this gesture. The audience gave an audible sigh of relief as the curtain rapidly descended. The mere suggestion of a passionate kiss sufficed

Passionate kisses that are more than suggested are apt to offend the house. When Mr. Matheson Lang in "Blood and Sand" kissed the heroine not on the lips but on the—well, on the *décolletage*, the act may have been in keeping with the Southern temperament of the Spanish *torero;* but it shocked the audience. Indeed, the gallery, which represents the height of British propriety, is apt to mock at all kisses on the stage with a loud smack of the lips and to the ruin of the scene.

It is this British propriety which makes most of our stage kisses so unreal or, what is worse, makes our stage-lovers go on protesting and declaiming at a juncture when real lovers would neither protest nor declaim but just kiss and have done with it. The tradition began with the novel. There is not one lovers' kiss, as I have elsewhere had occasion to observe, in all Jane Austen. That may have been natural enough for a maiden lady, born and bred in a country parsonage. But how many lovers' kisses are there in Walter Scott? How many in the great Victorians? Yet, we may be sure, human nature and human love have always been the same. It is only freedom to represent them in art that has been restricted. The old Puritanism still lingers in us, at any rate in the playhouse. For our novelists at last have cast it out. But our drama has not.

I do not forget the distinction between things read and things seen. That is a justification for the stage Censorship. The Censorship would be more liberal than it is if it were not obsessed by fear of the Puritans. As things are, it works most mischief on English adaptations of foreign plays. Under its watchful eye, or the fear of its watchful eye, these adaptations become absurd, childish, unveracious, impossible. The lover and mistress of the original are transmogrified into an "engaged," or even a married, couple. A light-o'-love is disguised as a "dancer." Stories are made meaningless, and the ingenuity of sophisticated playgoers is exercised in guessing what they must have originally signified.

Their lips, for all you could see, may never have met. But the lady had a most expressive back. It shivered in such a way that you were quite convinced.

But behind the Censor there are the Puritans. One of the most dour and hidebound of these is (or was at the time) Mr. Bernard Shaw. "I have a technical objection," he writes in one of his prefaces, "to making sexual infatuation a tragic theme. Experience proves that it is only effective in the comic spirit. We can bear to see Mrs. Quickly pawning her plate for love of Falstaff, but not Antony moving away from Actium for love of Cleopatra. Let realism have its demonstration, comedy its criticism . . . but to ask us to subject our souls to its ruinous glamour, to worship it, deify it, and imply that it alone makes our life worth living, is nothing but folly gone mad erotically—a thing compared to which Falstaff's unbeglamoured drinking and drabbing is respectable and rightminded. Whoever, then, expects to find Cleopatra a Circe and Cæsar a hog in these pages had better lay down my book and be spared a disappointment."

But if Cleopatra *was* a Circe and Cæsar *did* for the nonce become one of her swine, are we never to be shown them as such because Mr. Shaw prefers to present them "in the comic spirit"—Cleopatra a school miss and Cæsar a Mommsenized G. B. S.? Anyhow, the idea that sexual infatuation, which is Mr. Shaw's name for love, is only good to be laughed at is essentially a Puritan idea, and "experience proves" that it is false. There is no question of worshipping it or deifying it; it is a puissant force, an ineluctable fate, and quite the most serious thing in human life.

It cannot, therefore, be treated adequately

in the comic spirit any more than death can. Comedy and farce may invite us to laugh at its excesses, its affectations, its pretences—there is no serious subject that has not its ludicrous side—but they will not furnish us with an account of the whole matter. Unfortunately, such an account is rarely, if ever, attempted in our theatre. The Puritan tradition is against it. The inertia of human nature is against it. And, perhaps, the very nature of drama itself is against it.

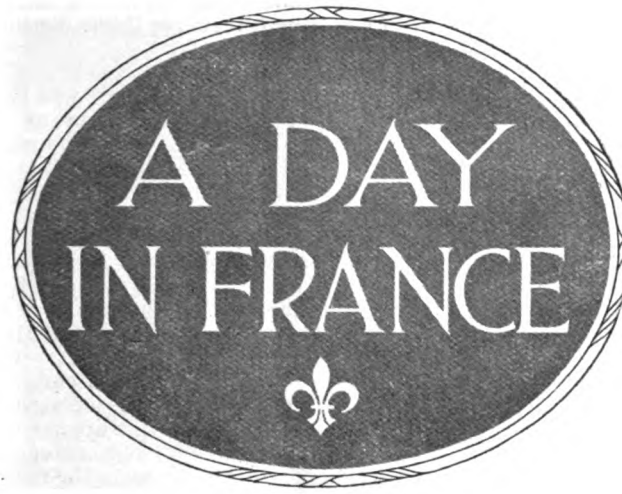
By the inertia of human nature I mean the tendency of playwrights to offer, and of the public to accept, the "usual thing." It is easier to repeat commonplaces, to copy conventional patterns, than to practise first-hand, fresh, and keen-sighted observation. I said just now that human love has always been the same. In essence, yes; but the way it manifests itself, the behaviour of lovers, the characteristics of it, as we say, these vary from age to age. Love to-day is a much more subtle and "rich" thing than it was in our grandfathers' time; it has been complicated by all the changes in the relations of the sexes that have occurred in the interval; yet how often do we not see second-hand and shop-soiled Victorian specimens put forward as modern lovers?

And the very nature of drama itself, which is will-conflict taking visible form in action, may unfit it for exhibiting many, and those not the least significant, phases of love, because they are passive phases, moods, fugitive emotions, spiritual crises, that are not registered by external action. Now, the novel can deal with these things in perfect ease and freedom; and it is to the novel we have to go for anything like an adequate account of modern love. The stage, for the most part, is content to use love as a means to a plot rather than as a theme for its own sake. Things happen to lovers there—separation, reconciliation, elopements, marriage, divorce—their love is assumed as a fact to build adventures upon; but the nature of the fact, its peculiar quality, its *vie intérieure*, you never know. And so, when playgoers complain, as some will, that they are tired of plays "about love," you wonder where they can have seen any. They can only mean that they are bored by the adventures and misadventures of people labelled as lovers.

ANOTHER obstacle to the adequate portrayal of love in our theatre—which is, indeed, an obstacle to any kind of artistic progress there—is yet to be mentioned. I mean the Imaginary Public. The imaginary public is the ghost of a public which was once real. It represents a past which the world in general has outgrown. It haunts the theatres of timid managers and speculators who wish to be on the safe side. Try any kind of theatrical reform and you will at once find it used as a formidable argument against you. "The public would never stand it," you are told. Nor are the managers the only believers in this phantom. The Censor is ruled by it. Even theatrical iconoclasts have respected this idol: witness Mr. Shaw, with his "experience proves." It is a mere bogy, an imaginary terror. Only the other day an old actor told me a certain drama would never do because there was a seduced girl in it as well as a man between two women, and there was a stage superstition that both were "unlucky." That superstition reflected the mind of a public long ago. The play spoken of is one of the big successes of the season. "The ancients are the ancients," said Molière, "but we are the people of to-day." The imaginary public is Puritan, prudish, philistine, obscurantist; but, let us be easy, it is dead. We people of to-day want the things of to-day shown on the stage, and, among them, the love of to-day. I am not thinking of Divorce Court "revelations," bedroom scenes, or other vulgarities. There has never been any lack of attention to that side of the matter in the theatre. But there is a new psychology of love which is, in the best sense of the term, "amusing," and ought to be seen on the stage. How "amusing" it is novel-readers know. There is no Censorship of the novel. And so the novelists have gone ahead and tackled the problems and the psychology of modern love. It is time, I submit, that our stage followed suit. To do that, it may have to recruit a new *personnel*. We have one or two actresses who can portray passion and who have the requisite brains for new experiments in depicting it; but they belong, or soon will, to the older generation. The youngsters, oddly enough, seem to know nothing about it. They can be petulant, "nice," coquettish, prim, anything but passionate. Perhaps they marry too young. Anyhow, the men seem to be afraid to kiss them, except at the usual respectful distance. The one instance to the contrary I best remember among recent performances was, paradoxically enough, in the Puritan Mr. Shaw's "Heartbreak House":—

> LADY UTTERWORD (*rising brightly*): Well you are my brother-in-law. Hermione asked you to kiss me. (HECTOR *seizes her in his arms, and kisses her strenuously.*) Oh! that was a little more than play, brother-in-law. (*She pushes him suddenly away.*) You shall not do that again.

Lady Utterword, it may be remarked, was no chicken. No more was the actress who played her.



BY

W. B. MAXWELL

ILLUSTRATED BY S. ABBEY

THEIR neighbours and friends at Tudor Green said Mr. and Mrs. Hull would have been all right except for *pride*. For a man like Hull, who was merely a second-grade *employé* of the Corporation, such pride was outrageously absurd; and for a woman like his wife, who had been neither more nor less than a housemaid, it was worse.

But, in fact, the Hulls showed the pride only with regard to matters concerning their little daughter Elizabeth. They were rearing that child in a ridiculous, stuck-up style. Nothing on earth was too good for her.

Mr. Baines of the gas-works, who was almost their nearest neighbour and quite their best friend, spoke to Hull about it in its early manifestations.

"I'm goin' to take a liberty," said Mr. Baines.

"Granted beforehand," said Mr. Hull; and he stood and listened good-humouredly. He was a grey-haired, short, stout man, with a broad red face and a jolly manner.

Mr. Baines, taller and heavier, although not stout, spoke habitually in a solemn way. When nettled, he always tried to be ironical, and failing, or missing the anticipated effect, generally lost his temper. But he was a kindly creature and soon became tranquil again.

"We regard it as a mistake," he said, concluding his advice. "You'll only unfit her for her station."

"Well, why shouldn't she change her station?" said Mr. Hull, permitting the pride to display itself. "Young folk needn't be condemned to remain where they are and never rise, need they? My station is municipal servant at four quid per week; but if I had the education and talent—if I had the proper chances—I suppose there's no law to prevent me being mayor of the borough, eh?"

"No," said Mr. Baines, in his heavy ironical way, "not if you inherited a fortune, and retired, and got yourself elected to the town council, and——"

"Just so. Well, her mother and me, we think we're giving Lizzie her first chances—and we consider, her being an only child, it's our duty to do it."

But, of course—as with the great majority of human actions—they did it because they liked doing it. The child was a pet to her father, a doll to her mother, and to both an occupation, an amusement, the absorbing joy of their lives.

On Sunday afternoons in summer, when she had reached the age of nine or ten, and they were dispatching her to attend afternoon school, their pride seemed to fill the quiet, respectable road from end to end of it. They led her out, dressed in white muslin with black silk stockings and a pink satin

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sash; they inspected her in the tiny front garden to make sure that her yellow hair was fluffed out nicely beneath the new chip-straw hat, that the coral necklace was in position, the gloves properly buttoned; and then they stood outside their front gate in an ecstasy of admiration to watch her as she went mincingly off along the pavement.

"Turn your toes out, darling," Mrs. Hull called after her. "Keep your chin up."

Compared with the other children of the road coming out of the other houses in their coloured serges and woollen stockings, she looked like a princess, a fairy, or anything else that is high above the sphere of ordinary mortals. The parents of those other children witnessed the passage of Miss Lizzie with less than no pleasure; they uttered unflattering comments and even made grimaces, or retired into their houses shrugging their shoulders and muttering, feeling completely "fed up."

If Mrs. Hull saw young Edward Baines anywhere about she would beckon him, and say, "Eddie, dear, walk with Liz as far as the school—and don't let any of them brats be rude to her or try to play their tricks. Bring her back, too, after school, will you? There's a dear boy."

Eddie Baines, who was several years older than Lizzie, often acted thus as her escort and sometimes shyly offered her little childish presents as tokens of esteem and regard. But one memorable Sunday, instead of escorting her straight home, he beguiled her to play with some friends of his at hide-and-seek in a yard at the gas-works to which he had access by reason of his father's official position; and playing there (*playing*, if you please, dressed like that), Lizzie tumbled upon an abominable heap of cinders and chemical waste. He brought her home then weeping bitterly, not because she had injured herself, but because she had ruined her pretty frock; and Mrs. Hull in her furious indignation said cruelly severe things to the shamefaced Eddie. He was forgiven, however, when he brought next day a large box of chocolates with a picture on the top and silk ribbons all round. The boy had spent all his savings in this effort to make amends, and Mrs. Hull and her husband were touched by so handsome a proof of contrition and respect. His companionship with their idol was again permitted.

Moreover, Lizzie occasionally paid a sort of visit of state to Eddie's father and mother; for, though the Baineses thoroughly disapproved of her education and training, they liked the child herself, and it gave them satisfaction to see her seated there at the tea-table in all her gorgeous raiment and exhibiting such graceful table manners, with their big Eddie dancing attendance on her.

BUT when Lizzie was twelve or thirteen, and getting on so nicely with her French, her piano-playing, her water-colour drawing, and what not else refined and ladylike, Mrs. Baines upset Mrs. Hull by nudging her, while she pointed at the young people and said significantly that they looked just like a pair of sweethearts or an engaged couple keeping company together.

"Certainly not," said Mrs. Hull, warmly "Nothing of the sort. Lizzie, you come indoors and do your embroidery."

Indeed, on this occasion she spoke in a manner so little urbane that Mrs. Baines was offended, and one of the many passing coldnesses between the families now ensued.

The mere hint of such an alliance had seemed to Mrs. Hull as presumptuous as it was irritating; and yet, if you came to think of it, Baines was an honoured official at the gas-works, better off, really in a higher walk of life than Hull. Talking it over, she and her husband perhaps for the first time realized the largeness of their hopes and the strength of their conviction that, if they fitted the girl for a splendid future, the splendours would unfold themselves in due course.

Lizzie, for her part, had no qualms as to the ultimate grandness of her career. A grateful as well as an affectionate child, she would throw her arms round the necks of her parents and in impulsive gushes of feeling vow to repay all their indulgence and promise that later on she meant to buy them a mansion to live in, motor-cars to ride in, and servants to answer the bell for them.

"Bless your loving heart," said her father, "we don't want none of that. So's we can see you established and living like the little lady we've made of you, *we* shall feel content. *Our* job will be done."

But "No, no," cried Lizzie. "You shall have your full share."

Safely and rapidly, then, she grew up. She was almost twenty-one—and quite a pretty girl, with her lightish blue eyes and long straight nose; that yellow hair of hers a little darker than it used to be, and now braided in a coronet round her head, but flopping down over each ear. To her parents' eyes she was entrancingly beautiful; and her enormously refined, almost lackadaisical manner seemed like the rich harvest of all their pains and care.

She had wanted to help her mother in the housework, to make herself useful, anyhow—but Mrs. Hull would not hear of this. "No, no, darling; you have your music and

Lisette would chant a French ballad with an accent so perfect that the visitor could not understand a single word.

our studies. Go on improving yourself." o the mother waited upon the daughter and and foot, as the saying is. It was nough for Mrs. Hull to stand in the door- ay of the parlour, with her head a little n one side, admiring, when Lisette was ceiving one of the lady district visitors, r even the curate himself. The broad aternal breast swelled with pride as she bserved Lisette's elegant ease and listened o her faultless diction: "Pray be seated, liss Tompkinson. How exceedingly kind f you to call! I have been pining for a ttle society."

"Sing Miss Tompkinson one of your rench songs," Mrs. Hull would say, wiping er damp hand upon her apron. "She ngs French something lovely, Miss Tomp- inson."

And Lisette, with the condescending air of a young queen, would go to the cottage piano and chant a French ballad in her thin, high-trained little voice, and with an accent so perfect that the visitor could not understand a single word.

It should have been mentioned that, at the girl's own suggestion, her original names of Elizabeth, Lizzie, or Liz had been discarded a year or two ago as a little too common and familiar, and she was now Lisette. Mr. and Mrs. Hull delighted in the change.

Naturally so much beauty and refinement attracted the attention of the other sex, and without doubt Lisette might have had many suitors had she encouraged the youthful males of their road. But, far from doing this, she kept everybody at arm's length.

However, one evening in May, Mr. Baines, strolling with Mr. Hull along the path between the allotment gardens and the railway, spoke about marriage.

"I'm going to take a liberty," said Mr. Baines.

"You take a many of them, don't you, old man?" said Mr. Hull, cheerily. "But fire ahead."

"Then I'll ask frankly—have you decided what you're going to do with your gal Lizzie?"

"Lisette," said Mr. Hull, correcting him. "No, I have not. It's for her to decide."

Then Mr. Baines, in a heavy, solemn fashion, made a proposal on behalf of his son Edward, who, as he alleged, continued to nourish the feeling of affection for Lisette that had subsisted when they were both children; as Mr. Baines put it, he was still hankering after her. But he did not want to be snubbed for his pains, and had therefore thought it best to open negotiations through the parental authorities.

BY this time Edward Baines had developed into a great, broad-chested, hearty fellow; as big as his father, but without the father's heavy aspect and mode of talking. Indeed, he had a loud haw-haw laugh, loved a joke, and could be heard haw-hawing late and early, from one end of the road to the other. He was employed at the gas-works, on the clerical side, and was already earning good money, with his foot on the first step of the ladder, as his father said, and likely to ascend the ladder steadily.

Mr. Hull showed no elation in receiving this overture. In fact, he seemed worried and embarrassed. He said he must talk it over with Lisette's mother, and then let Mr. Baines know.

"That's it," said Mr. Baines. "And I'll ask you not to confine it to Mrs. Hull, but to speak to Lisette herself. You say it's for her to decide; well, let her think it over before she gives her answer."

Mrs. Hull liked the notion even less than in those bygone days when it had first been presented to her. She said it was not to be thought of for a moment. "Bother the fellow," said Mrs. Hull. "Why can't he keep in his place? He's always hanging around after her. Follows her about, and stands outside when she's singing. It's more than time to send him to the right-abouts."

To her great satisfaction Lisette took an entirely proper view of the matter. It could not be said that Lisette treated it lightly. Indeed, she smiled and giggled rather sillily, twisting herself from side to side on the music-stool, and saying a declaration of this sort must always be taken as a compliment. She said, too, that she was genuinely touched by the devotion of Eddie. He was a dear boy. She respected him. Yes, and she liked him. "Although not in that way." Then she became delightfully refined, saying, in effect, that the fact was poor Eddie, never having had proper advantages, was dreadfully common. That laugh of his—haw-haw haw! The people with whom he associated. And that trick of "garnishing his conversation with expletives."

Mrs. Hull was absolutely enraptured by this last turn of phrase, which, for a moment, she had difficulty in understanding. Expletives, meaning the same thing as strong words? What an elegant way of putting it!

"I quite agree, Lisette. Bringing in all those damns and blasts, without any sense or reason. It's downright vulgar. He ought to be ashamed of himself."

But Lisette would not go so far as this. She said again that he was a dear fellow, and she was very anxious that her rejection of his hand should be broken to him gently. "It will make me very uncomfortable when we next meet," she added, lackadaisically.

"Oh, he won't bother you no more henceforth," said Mrs. Hull.

Mr. Baines, on being informed that his big son must abandon hope, was nettled, ironical, and angry. He assured Mr. Hull that one "No" was enough for all of them; that Eddie would look somewhere else; that there were as good fish in the sea, and so on. Another coldness ensued—more especially after Mr. Baines had been overheard saying to his son—"Don't fret or be surprised, my lad. They're reserving her for the Prince of Wales."

It was during the summer of that same year that there occurred the grand concert arranged in aid of the church funds at the parish hall. As a part of this entertainment, Miss Lisette Hull gave a song and a recitation. The song, being in a language with which few of the audience were acquainted, fell rather flat; but the recitation—"Curfew Shall Not Toll To-night"—brought the house down. Mrs. Hull had a heavenly time of it, receiving felicitations on her daughter's talent. And two days afterwards Lisette herself announced that she was going on the stage. At last she had chosen a career; and she bore down all opposition, waving away her parents' doubts and fears, and telling them of the vast earnings and the high social position achieved nowadays by successful actresses.

Mr. and Mrs. Hull sought advice from the curate, the district visitors, and other

influential friends, but meantime Lisette was in London, trotting from one theatrical agent's office to another. Early in November she told them, with sparkling eyes, that she had been promised an engagement. And before the month was over she had packed her boxes and was gone.

SHE was gone, and they missed her most horribly, only sustaining themselves in the dullness of life with thoughts of her great success. She had soon written, from the North of England, to report how very successful she had been, and week by week they received hurriedly-written postcards bearing the names of different towns. Then came a letter with money in it—not very much money—twenty shillings—but splendid substantial proof of her success. Everybody in the road heard of this.

And Mr. Hull, smoking a newly-purchased cigar, went round to the Baineses' and resumed cordial relations in order to be able to tell them how he had received a handsome present of money from his successful little girl.

"Is she coming home for Christmas?" asked Mrs. Baines.

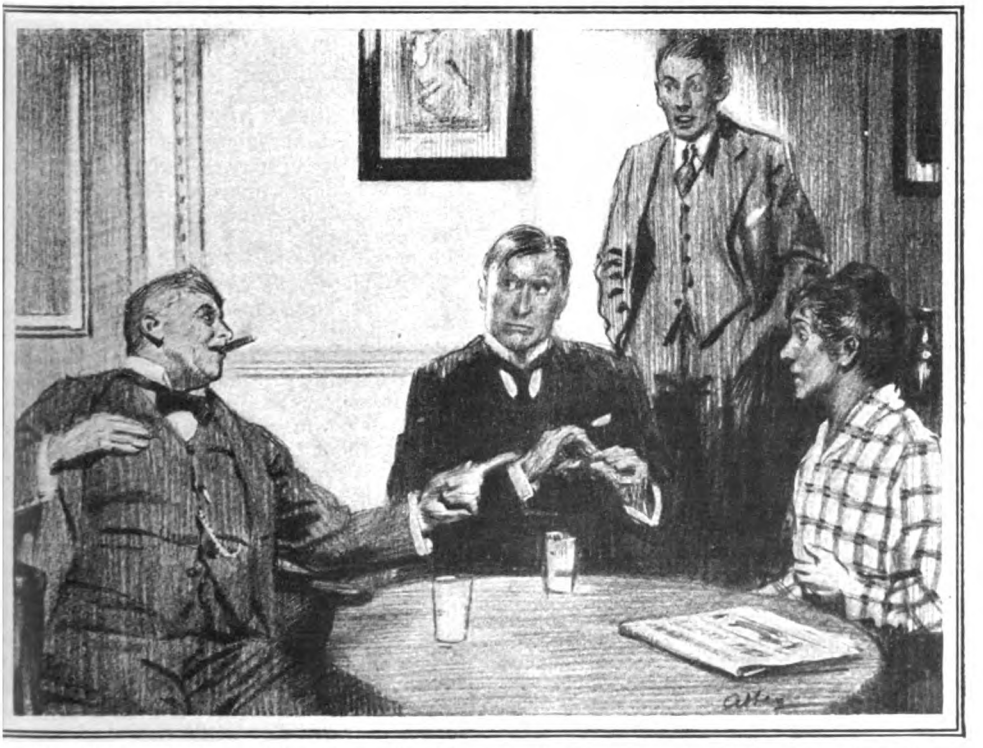
"No; can't get away. Can't be spared," and the proud father held forth to them about the modern stage, the vast salaries earned thereon, and the respect shown to its more prominent stars by all the world nowadays. "It's a grand profession."

"We don't see her mentioned in the papers," said Baines.

"You will do, old boy. She's going right up, Lisette is. But, o' course, Rome wasn't built in a day."

She did not come home that Christmas, nor the next Christmas; she never came home. But she wrote to them at longer and longer intervals; occasionally sending them money—once as much as thirty shillings, once as little as three half-crowns—and always speaking of further triumphs, higher rewards. Some long letters that they wrote to her came back to them through the Dead Letter Office. She was moving about, now here, now there, apparently. Then she surprised them by a bald announcement that she had abandoned the legitimate stage and gone in for film work. The films paid one best of all.

Mr. Hull talked very big about this new development, telling the Baineses that picture theatres formed the third largest industry of America, that fabulous fortunes were



Mr. Hull talked very big, telling the Baineses that a young female star could easily earn her three hundred thousand a year—"Sterling, you know, not dollars."

piled up by the producers, and that a young female star could easily earn her three hundred thousand a year at the job.

"Sterling, you know, not dollars."

Lisette's success as a film actress became a sort of legend all round her old home. It appealed to people's imagination; and the most superior kind of visitors, such as the curate and Miss Tompkinson, would look in on the Hulls to offer congratulations.

"How proud you must be of her, Mrs. Hull!"

"We are that, sir. It's a great comfort to her father and me to feel that nothing we ever done for her was wasted, and that we were justified in giving her every opportunity."

"But we don't see her in none of the plays that come down this way," said Mr. Baines. "Eddie goes to the movies pretty regular, and he keeps a sharp look-out, but he hasn't not once seen her face."

"He will do," said Mr. Hull, firmly. "I dessay the big things she's engaged in are mostly shown in the United States. That's the real home of it. Between you and me—confidential, mind you—I ain't sure that they haven't summoned her out to California."

And truly he was not sure; for a long while had passed since the receipt of her last postcard. Ah, there was the sadness in the midst of the gratification; it was glorious and elevating to brood upon her successful career, but they had lost her herself. Their love and affection had been torn to pieces, and only their pride remained.

Mrs. Hull during the first year of the overwhelming emptiness used to beguile her unoccupied hours by cleaning Lisette's bedroom so as to have it ready, by brushing and tidying the old garments in the wardrobe and drawers, by arranging and rearranging Lisette's music, water-colour paint-boxes, books, and knick-knacks. But now she ceased to do this. Her temper was not as good as it once had been, she sometimes nagged at Hull, and she had secret fits of weeping that left her with red rims round her eyes. This significant discoloration of the orbits annoyed Hull.

"Now, mother, I won't have it. Be sensible."

"I try to be," said Mrs. Hull, whimperingly, as she brought out her handkerchief.

"It isn't fair to me—an' it isn't fair to Liz either. Use your common sense. Can't you understand how busy they keep her?"

"It's no good," sobbed Mrs. Hull, breaking down. "She ought to a' bin to see us. I try to make excuses—but I can't. Besides, the money—what she did used to send us—it was too small. Heaven knows I don't want her money—but it was *too* small. You see it as well as I do. And—and she used to promise that in her prosperity she'd never forget us."

Mr. Hull said he would not have it, he hated such nonsense; he was proud and happy to know that the girl had done so well. But, in the course of solitary rambles after the day's work, sadness was with him. Like a child, he gave his thoughts sometimes that old prelude of "Suppose and suppose." Suppose that he and his wife had come together earlier and had been blessed with half-a-dozen children instead of only one child—the one spoilt darling of two elderly people's hearts. Or suppose they had been less ambitious, bringing her up in more ordinary style, letting her drop into her natural place among those of her class. Suppose she had married somebody in this very road and had lived close to them, giving them a grandchild or two to carry them on. Suppose they had welcomed the suit of Eddie Baines. Eddie must have been really fond of her, for he had never married anybody else.

Turning from such grievous suppositions, Mr. Hull solaced himself with dreams. His favourite day-dream was of a vast motor-car coming down their road one of these fine August evenings. From the car alights Lisette, gorgeous in fur cloak and fashionable evening dress; with her are two gentlemen, also wearing fur. One of them is the millionaire manager; the other—"Daddy, this is Lord So-and-so, my future husband." Or better still—"Daddy, don't be angry with me for not telling you before, but the Earl and I were married last year, and this is my very first chance of bringing him to see the kindest, dearest father and mother that ever lived."

TOWARDS the end of September they went to France. It was the most adventurous thing that they had ever done, and but for the persuasion of Mr. and Mrs. Baines they would have recoiled from it as altogether too big.

"What d'you say to this?" said Baines, showing them the railway hand-bill. "'A Day in France. . . . Mail steamers . . . Six hours on French soil!' . . . The missis here is mad for it. Eddie is coming along with us. You'd better join. Share and share alike—and hang the expense."

They all set out from Tudor Green very early in the morning, and had to wait at the London terminus for an hour at least before the boat train started. The crowd there was tremendous, the long-distance travellers mingling with the day excursionists; and something of that confusion of spirit that falls upon the strongest men,

when compelled to wrestle with the unknown, rendered Mr. Hull very fussy and nervous. At the last moment he went back through the barrier to buy a favourite weekly newspaper, and thus nearly let the train, after all, start without him. Eddie Baines was on the step of the compartment, waving his arms and shouting, as Mr. Hull came running along the platform, "Haw-haw!"

At Folkestone Harbour Mr. Hull, assuming a nonchalance that he did not feel, allowed himself to be driven like a bullock in a mob of bullocks up the narrow gangway and on board the boat. He was already tired, with sensations of having been up all night and an after-taste of excitement that made him yawn. The boat was, if possible, more crowded than the train. They had the greatest difficulty in securing seats, and then sank into them exhausted—that is, the four elders of the party. Eddie Baines was here, there, and everywhere, with the inexhaustible vigour of youth, pushing and elbowing, and haw-hawing in full enjoyment of the outing.

Although the weather was kind, granting them a gloriously fine day and a sea like glass, the two ladies suffered from the mere vibration of the vessel, and refused to budge from their chairs, even after being given such restoratives as Guinness's stout and hard biscuits. When the ship got out to sea, and the white cliffs of Albion began to fade in the sunlight and drop into the waves, the gentlemen sauntered through the crowd about the decks—Mr. Baines, very tall and dignified in his black cut-away coat, with a field-glass slung over his shoulder, and a bowler hat on the back of his head, and Mr. Hull in a grey costume, and a straw hat which already had tried to blow away, and been only saved by the strong elastic cord that held it to his waistcoat.

They discovered one person whom they recognized as belonging to Tudor Green—a Mr. Follett, who kept a book shop near the Parade. They had never spoken to him before, but they felt that the bond of travel and adventure now united them, and they talked to him for some time beside one of the life-boats, expatiating on the remarkable coincidence of their thus meeting. "If I'm not mistaken, sir, you come from Tudor Green." That was how they began the conversation.

During the voyage both Mr. Hull and Mr. Baines provided themselves with French money, and they called in the aid of Eddie to assist them with information.

"How many of these francs d'you say go to the pound? I shall never get the hang of it."

There were a certain number of French people on board, and at the sound of their voluble talk Mr. Hull said: "That's what we shall be in the thick of when we get ashore. We ought to have our Lisette with us to do the parlez-vous."

BOULOGNE in due course rose from the water, and clearly defined itself with its picturesque heights, the cathedral, and the massed roofs. The absolute strangeness and novelty of everything almost overwhelmed them when they disembarked and were being herded through the Custom House halls and passages in the midst of the shouting French porters, the uniformed officials, and the anxious owners of registered baggage. Only Eddie Baines was at his ease, haw-hawing as usual, and telling them it was nothing to him, because he'd been here in the war. He led them at last, when released by the authorities, into the buffet of the railway station; and here, their ears ringing with parlez-vous, they had a substantial snack, consisting of omelette, Camembert cheese, and other French delicacies.

"But we mustn't waste our time," said Mr. Baines. "We must see all we can." And Mr. Hull concurred, while calculating his money, and again asking how many francs to the pound.

They drifted away then along the quay, still among the crowd of excursionists, who presently filtered through the town and were absorbed by the native population. The harbour with all the fishing boats, the bridge across the river, the women carrying huge baskets on their bowed backs, the men in blue trousers, the sheer Frenchness of everything, delighted them. After a tour of the two main streets they chartered an open fly; with Eddie Baines's aid making a contract for an hour's drive up to the cathedral, round the old town, and so on. Mr. Baines, Junior, preferred to remain on his feet. It was now about two o'clock, and they agreed that they should meet him here at the end of the bridge when their drive was over, and have their regular luncheon or dinner at one of the restaurants on the quay. They instructed him to choose the best eating-house he could find, reserve them a table there, and be on the look-out for them.

All this plan was duly carried into effect. An hour later the well-burdened fly returned, and Eddie assisted them to pay the driver, and then led them over the cobble-stones along the noisy street. He had a jovial, almost a triumphant air, nodding his head and winking, as well as haw-hawing. "Oh, yes, I've found the place for you. Haw-haw! The only place in Boulogne."

It was the commonest sort of restaurant, and Mr. Hull demurred at its humble aspect. "Hang the expense. A treat is a treat." Surely they might have found something better. But young Eddie dragged them in, and established them at a table near the window.

"Come on! I've ordered the grub. Everything's waiting. Sit down." And he nudged his father, and laughed and winked, as though enjoying some secret amusement.

Mrs. Hull and Mrs. Baines took off their hats, and sighed in their fatigue, after seating themselves. Mr. Hull began again to calculate his money. "Twelve francs for our refreshments at the station, and I gave that feller two francs for himself. Twenty francs for the drive. How many of these francs to the pound, did you say?"

THE place consisted of one large room, with a counter behind which the wife of the proprietor had her chair; but she was now seated with the proprietor at a table. There were English excursionists at three other tables finishing their food, and one or two French people at the remaining tables, smoking and drinking coffee. A black-haired greasy waiter was serving them.

"But there's a waitress for *us*," said Eddie. "Haw-haw! She talks English, too." And he winked and nodded at his father. "Here, mossoo," and he called across the room to the proprietor, "where's our dinner? Hurry up."

The proprietor, with a napkin under his chin, rose and talked to them volubly and courteously in the unknown tongue, then went to a door that obviously led to the kitchens, and talked very volubly there. They understood that he was calling to the waitress, but all that he said was gibberish, except the name by which he called her.

"Lisette! Lisette!"

Mr. and Mrs. Hull raised their heads at the sound of that name, and looked towards the open doorway. At the same moment the waitress entered, carrying a big tray. With pale face and downcast eyes she brought it across to them and put it on their table. She was Lisette—their own Lisette. No one else. Shabby and woe-begone in her black waitress's frock; very thin, her long nose seeming longer than ever, her blue eyes seeming tarnished and dull, then filling with tears, as she looked at her parents and tremblingly distributed the dishes and plates.

"Haw-haw! Isn't this a surprise?" said Eddie. "I spotted her from the pavement, and, if you please, she wanted me to take you somewhere else. But I said, 'No; it's time we all met again.'"

"Lisette!" said her father, almost in a whisper. "How have you dropped to this?"

"I've been unlucky," murmured Lisette, handing them a basket of bread.

"Unlucky!" said Mrs. Hull. "Worse than that, you shameful hussy. Don't tell me!"

No words could convey the terrible bitterness of this discovery, made to their friends as well as to themselves. It reduced them to anguish. For a little while, at least, it wiped out all love and tenderness, and, in their intolerable shame and distress, they were both very cruel to the girl. It seemed that they must be; that they could only recover their dignity by attacking her. Mrs. Hull was worse than her husband, shouting in wrath, saying ridiculous things. "You're no daughter of mine. We cast you off. We disown you."

"What d'you mean," cried Mr. Hull, "by the pack of lies you've told us—all your success, and the rest of it?"

"I was ashamed to tell you the truth," said Lisette.

"And so you might, you brazen minx."

"'Ere, I say!" said Eddie. "Easy on. Don't sling it at her like this."

But Mr. and Mrs. Hull continued to make a dreadful noise, still denouncing the girl, still saying they cast her off.

All the other people in the restaurant were watching and talking. "What is it?—It's the meeting of a father and a daughter.—Which is the father?—Don't interrupt between parent and child.—Well, if they want to make such a dashed row, let 'em go outside, can't they?"

The proprietor and the proprietress had, of course, come to the table. They added to the noise by their anxious inquiries. Lisette was now weeping and wringing her hands, and assuring the restaurant-keepers that it was no fault of hers.

"There, there!" said Eddie Baines. "That's enough. Let's have our food, and then perhaps she can get an hour off and tell us all about it. Take it easy, Lisette."

Somehow or other the unhappy parents got through their meal without being choked. By the time it was over the restaurant was empty, and no objection was made to their taking the waitress out with them. They went along the quay past the casino, Eddie and the girl walking ahead and the elders following. Somewhere near the casino gates, where there were automatic machines, Eddie stopped and invited Lisette to try her strength at the gripping machine. Poor child! She had not much strength; so little that it made him say "Haw-haw!"—yet not unkindly. Moreover, he extracted some sweets for her from another machine.

The other people in the restaurant were watching and talking. "What is it? If they want to make such a row, let 'em go outside."

"I'm sure you're very good to her," said Mrs. Hull, dolefully, "and she doesn't deserve it, after the way she's disgraced us all."

"Gently, gently," said Mr. Baines. "She hasn't told us her side of the tale yet."

They went on past the big hotel and the garden with the flower-beds and the statue, and made their way down to the broad sands. Here, at a distance from the crowd, they ensconced themselves in the remains of a sand fortress that had been made by some children, and they held a sort of trial of poor Lisette.

All round them was the glitter of the sunlight, the murmur of the sea, and the faint noise of voices. Mr. and Mrs. Baines, sitting side by side, listened like impartial judges, enjoying the humiliation of their friends less than might have been expected. Mr. and Mrs. Hull sat on either side of the culprit, plying her with questions, sometimes pulling her by the elbow when she kept one of them waiting while she answered the other. Eddie Baines, stretching his length of limb over the powdery mounds of sand, ceased to haw-haw, and watched the girl's face attentively. She told them the whole story; crying a little, from time to time, as she explained the different parts of it. The elders commented on it, and explained it to one another—at last becoming emotionally affected by it. She had not succeeded. She had failed. That was the salient fact. But after all that her parents had done for her she was ashamed to confess the failure, and had therefore concealed it, pretending that she was getting on very well instead of very badly. But it came out quite plainly that she had never done anything really wrong. No matter what temptations had lain in her path, she had preserved her virtue.

"I consider that a feather in her cap," said Mr. Baines, magnanimously.

"So do I," said Mrs. Baines. "It does you credit, Lisette, thrown among such gangs as you've been with."

And the pitiful tale went on.

Her experience of the stage consisted of supernumerary work with a wretched touring company. All that she had done with the films was to sell programmes, and once, for a little while, to play the piano at a fit-up theatre on the end of a pier. The long hours of programme-selling proved too much for her—her feet gave out. Then, at the beginning of the summer, she and two or three other girls had come here as waitresses for the tourist season.

"But the money you sent us," said her father, suspiciously. "Where did you get that?"

"I saved it as best I could out of my earnings," said Lisette, crying more than before.

"It was a wicked deception," said Mr. Hull, with a return of wrath.

"Gently, gently," said Mr. Baines again. "I can understand her feelings; and if you ask me, I think it's you who've been wrong from the beginning."

"Yes, and trying to put her wrong, too," said Mrs. Baines. "But, to my mind, she's come out of the test very well."

"I could overlook everything," said Mr. Hull, "if it wasn't the deceit. When you were keeping it all back from us, Lizzie, you never thought of the blow it would be to our natural pride."

Then Eddie Baines abruptly rose to his feet. "Blow it all!" he said, loudly. "That's enough, isn't it? Why the deuce can't you leave her alone? If it's pride, I think she's shown a sight better pride than what you have."

"Gently, gently," said Mr. Baines.

"Come on, Liz," said Eddie, "and let's try our stren'th again." And taking the girl's hand he pulled her up. They walked off together across the sands, the elders calling after them, "Don't forget the boat starts at six o'clock. . . . And where are we to get our tea? Eddie! Hold on!"

"Same place," shouted Eddie.

THEY all met again at Lisette's restaurant, but it was the greasy waiter and not Lisette who attended to them. Eddie Baines explained curtly that Lisette was packing her traps. He had taken charge of things, and could not be restrained by his father's "Gently, gently." Mr. and Mrs. Hull observed him wonderingly, but made no attempt to interfere.

The voyage home was accomplished safely. It was dark when they reached Folkestone. Once in the train, they surrendered to the immense fatigue of the long day. The noise of the flying wheels, the beating of the screw and the faint oscillation of the vessel, the rattle of the cab upon those cobble-stones, and the strange chorus of the parlez-vous—all seemed to mingle and throb in their tired brains. Mrs. Hull was leaning against her husband; and as in a dream they saw in the corner opposite to them young Baines, sitting limply but looking immense, with his arm round Lisette's waist, and Lisette fast asleep with her head on his shoulder.

The Great Lady Pamela Syndicate

by

EDGAR MILNE

I.

YOUNG Mr. Algernon Mott, in his rooms in Half Moon Street, was still endeavouring, over his devilled kidneys and toast, to solve a mystery, when a familiar triple knock announced a friend, Captain Richard Bellamy.

"Good morning, Algy," cried the visitor, and then, as his eye fell on several newspapers copiously outspread on tray and table, "I see you treat yourself to plenty of light auroral literature."

"'Treat myself' be hanged! You've blown in just in time, Dick. Who in thunder is Lady Pamela Entwistle? Why should she or her friends send me marked copies of her social eccentricities?" Mott indicated by a gesture blue-pencilled passages in the *Times*, the *Morning Post*, and the *Mayfair Intelligencer*. Bellamy read them aloud with commentaries :—

Lady Pamela Entwistle, who has been spending some months at Cannes, is returning to her house in Curzon Street next week.

"Good! All is forgiven!"

A charming new study of Lady Pamela Entwistle.

Lady Pamela Entwistle was unable, through absence abroad, to obey Their Majesties' commands to the reception at Buckingham Palace on Thursday last.

"Well, can you blame her?"

Lady Pamela Entwistle's costume for the forthcoming Chelsea Arts Ball will be of gold and silver filigreed fabric, to represent "Un Souvenir de Benvenuto Cellini."

"The rogue! I can see her in it!"

"Well?" inquired Algy Mott.

"Well?" returned Bellamy. "A bit pushful, perhaps, eh?"

"I've never met the woman. I've never even heard of her."

"Nonsense! How do you know? Where were you last night?"

"At the Opera, as a matter of fact, with the Bunthornes. But what has that got to do with it? This thing is devilish queer. I sent down just now and borrowed a Debrett from old Punsher downstairs, and—what do you think?—*there's no Lady Pamela Entwistle in it!*"

"Ah! What's the date of your Debrett?"

"Quite a recent one."

"No good, my boy. There are any number of Lady Pamelas, and this particular one may have married a blighter named Entwistle within the past year or two. No, Algy, take my advice, and reflect—reflect earnestly upon any careless, unthinking behaviour on your part which might have led a susceptible young——"

"Try not to be an utter ass!" exclaimed Mott, impatiently. "Dick, who *is* this woman, and why has she sent these marked newspapers to *me?* That's what I want to know."

Bellamy selected a cigarette and lit it with an excessive deliberation.

"My dear Algy," he said, "if it comes to that, I wish *I* knew exactly who Lady Pamela Entwistle is, myself."

Mott started.

"You?" he ejaculated. "Have you, too, been getting this sort of——"

"No; I don't mean that. Understand me, Algy." Bellamy emitted an upward cloud from his cigarette. "Although I know Lady Pamela Entwistle better than anybody else on earth does—I haven't decided *who* she is—precisely." Then, suddenly changing his manner, Bellamy said: "I've come here, Algy, to have a serious, heart-to-heart talk with you. This is business."

MOTT, who knew of old something of Bellamy's idea of "business," exhibited a martyred look, threw himself on the sofa in his dressing-gown, and puffed a cigarette, permitting the co-operative man-servant to clear away the remains of his breakfast. When the man had vanished, Bellamy resumed:—

"Algy, I was reading in a book the other day what a tragedy it was that great inventors were so seldom able to exploit their own inventions. Someone else steps in and takes control, and they retire from the scene on a small annuity. Now—don't shoot!—I am a great inventor. I always felt I could invent something—I felt it even as a boy at Harrow—invent something beautiful, spiritual, gracious, really original."

"What have you invented now—a new cocktail?"

"Listen. The inspiration—the chance—has come at last. I *have* invented something. You want to know what it is. Well, I will keep you no longer in suspense. I will tell you. I have invented Lady Pamela Entwistle!"

"What!" cried Algernon Mott, bounding up from the sofa. "I might have guessed it! Another Bellamy spoof! Well, I'm dashed!"

"Your expressions are crude, Algy. Yes: *I* put those delightful paragraphs in the papers. *I* sent them to you. *You* read them. Tens of thousands of people have read them. Lady Pamela is my creation. Believe me, this is not a vulgar 'spoof,' as you call it. It is not to gratify an idle whim. No: it is in pursuance of a serious theory—the theory that personality, no matter how intense or impressive, has no vital dependence upon mere actuality." Bellamy began walking up and down the room. "A subjective thing can be just as true and real as if you saw and felt it. Modern London society is so vast and composite that nobody knows or cares who is who. Why? Simply because it is impossible that in the case of any given celebrity more than one person in a thousand can ever actually see them in the flesh. Celebrated people are only celebrated because their names appear in the newspapers oftener than others. Their lives are purely subjective—they live, move, and have their being within columns of type, and are attended by printed pages. It is like the heroes and heroines of the cinema: the world admires and falls in love with simulacra: we assume that they have a human basis——"

"They have human originals in Shepherd's Bush or Los Angeles or Poughkeepsie, N.Y.," interjected Mott.

"But we never see them—or hardly ever—and wouldn't know them if we saw them. Therefore, it doesn't in the least matter whether Lady Pamela Entwistle breathes, eats, sleeps, and walks about like other people as long as the great reading world is told that she does. Do you get me?"

"You mean you're going to bamboozle the public?"

"I propose a pleasant, active, and prosperous career for this beautiful, high-born fascinating lady. Fiction, which is avowedly nothing but fiction, is played out. Lady Pamela must be fact—subjective fact—real to everybody except Burke, Debrett, Lodge, and Webster, and not improbable even to them. She shall *do* things, Algy, my boy, all the things that other beautiful high-born, smart, real flesh and blood women do—go to dances, races, bazaars, first nights, canter in the Row, punt at Henley, also at Newmarket, improve the race at Stepney, watch one at Cowes, go off to the moors of Yorkshire in September and pal up with the Moors of Morocco in November—in short, Lady Pamela's going to be damned lively, I can tell you! She's going to be an invention worth exploiting."

Algy Mott went off into fits of laughter.

"You Napoleonic practical jokers always forget something," he cried. "Don't you see your invention will go clean to pieces in a fortnight? Don't you know that a modern society woman's popularity depends on being photographed, if she can't be seen in the

flesh. And as your Lady Pamela Thingumbob doesn't exist and cannot be seen, how can she be photographed? I'll give her a fortnight, and then the whole show will be given away."

"Don't get excited," returned Bellamy, with sardonic coolness. "Do you think I haven't thought of that? Lady Pamela *shall* be photographed—perpetually, superbly, enormously! You will meet her engaging features everywhere. You will see her at Ascot and Ranelagh, in her own dainty boudoir, rallying at tennis, romping in a forest glade, going through Boulter's Lock, bathing at Trouville—and always, remember this, Algy, always at a fixed fee! Likewise, she shall smirk radiantly for a soap-making firm and grimace ecstatically for a manufacturer of tooth-paste. I suppose you've forgotten that I took up photography seriously six months ago, when I planked down my Aunt Jane's legacy to finance 'Rena, Limited'? Rena, Limited, is my old and faithful batman, Bloggs, one of the cleverest operators in London. He is only waiting for just such a chance as this."

"Don't *you* forget," interjected Mott, "that I've put two hundred pounds into Rena, Limited! Well, supposing your harebrained hoax can be worked—who is the lady going to be? Who is to impersonate this mythical paragon? Who is to be Bloggs's sitter?"

Bellamy laughed.

"Ah, now we are getting to business. Listen. We have been pals, Algy, in many an adventure—you shall share my invention. We will form a syndicate—you, Bloggs, and myself. By George, old chap, Lady Pamela ought to fetch us in a thousand pounds. Listen!"

KEEPING COOL AT HENLEY.

A charming picture of Lady Pamela Entwistle and friends on her picturesque house-boat.

(*From "Rural Life."*)

II.

BELLAMY carried out his practical joke thoroughly in the course of the next few weeks. You could hardly run your eye down a Society and Personal or Fashionable Intelligence column without coming across the name of Lady Pamela Entwistle.

Mott engaged a small suite for her for two days at the Ritz Hotel, where he and Bellamy, not to mention several commissionaires and messenger boys, left innumerable cards upon her—the contents, in fact, of his and Bellamy's card-trays—and various sealed missives. Bellamy sent a note to the manager later, explaining that Lady Pamela had gone to Lord Meriton's town house instead, and cancelled the suite and asked that the bill and all correspondence should be forwarded to 167, Half Moon Street. Meanwhile, he used the hotel stationery for various communications to the editors of the society columns of the daily newspapers. Thus one read:—

Lady Pamela Entwistle gave a small dinner party yesterday at the Ritz. Several well-known society leaders were present.

In a few days Bellamy tried more artistic and complicated paragraphs, such as :—

Lady Pamela Entwistle showed to friends yesterday a beautiful model of the old Italian garden which the Chevalier Borini is constructing for Lady Pamela's Mayfair house. It is a reproduction of the exquisite Cinquecento garden of the Marchese Palavavicini at d'Este.

Another expedient of Bellamy's was to borrow splendour for his fictitious heroine by associating her name with real personages :—

Amongst those noted in the Row yesterday were H.R.H. the Duke of York, the Duke and Duchess of St. Albans, the Marchioness of Carew, Lord Bewlay, Lady Trevethin, Lady Pamela Entwistle, and Mrs. Asquith.

With the aid of coroneted note-paper, with Algy Mott's address (Algy had two rooms and a bath on the fourth floor in Half Moon Street), Bellamy showed how easy it was to introduce Lady Pamela's name into lists of guests issued by the organizers of public dinners, receptions, and fashionable gatherings. This procedure was not without its risks, but Bellamy was utterly reckless. Once, for example, a fastidious countess wrote to one editor to protest that no such person as "Lady Pamela Entwistle" had been present, as stated, at her drawing-room meeting for Distressed Belgravian Needlewomen, and desiring that the statement be corrected. The editor forwarded the letter to Lady Pamela and elicited a charming little note begging his insertion of the following :—

Lady Pamela Entwistle regrets that her many engagements prevented her being present at the recent meeting organized by the Countess of Carew for the alleviation of the condition of the Distressed Belgravian Needlewomen, in which cause she has laboured for years, but has forwarded instead her subscription to the honorary treasurer.

"A good fiver gone," grumbled Bellamy, "but it can't be helped."

Privately, there may have been a good many shocked and puzzled patricians and honorary secretaries who resented the unwarranted recurrence of "this Entwistle woman s" name in the various lists of "those present"; but the bulk of them doubtless charitably put it down to a clerical error or to a blunder in identity on the part of those "newspaper fellows."

Another bright idea of Bellamy's was to make up little paragraphs giving Lady Pamela's opinions on current topics, as well as little anecdotes of famous persons in European society, and notes on places she had visited. According to this light-hearted chit-chat, Lady Pamela had travelled over most of Europe, Asia, and Africa and met most living celebrities and not a few dead ones. Bellamy himself had a keen scent for a good story, and rarely heard one but he promptly passed it on to some journalist or other of his acquaintance as having been told to Lord This or Lady That by Lady Pamela Entwistle. Thus you read in the gossip columns :—

Lady Pamela Entwistle tells a good story of M. Clemenceau, whom she once audaciously asked what he thought of Landru etc.

Or—

When Lady Pamela Entwistle met the Shah of Persia, that monarch tried to shock her by saying, etc.

Or—

Lady Pamela Entwistle once laid a wager with Mr. F. E. Smith (now Lord Birkenhead) that, etc.

But it was only when Lady Pamela's picture at last got into the illustrated papers that the real boom began. The first "study" of Lady Pamela, which appeared on the front page of the *Prattler*, created a sensation. Then followed others in *Society's Realm*, *Rural Life*, *Town and Country*, the *Wayfarer*, and other popular periodicals. In a few weeks' time "Lady Pamela Entwistle. Copyright : Rena, Ltd." became a familiar legend. It may be mentioned that one of Bloggs's studies was bought for a handsome figure by a complexion specialist; another assisted to advertise a popular dentifrice, while beneath it ran the generous autograph tribute :—

I owe to White Cherry Paste more than I can ever tell.—PAMELA ENTWISTLE

As Bellamy had predicted, the fortunes of Rena, Limited, became immediately affected. The studio in Maddox Street was all too small to hold the throng of fashionable would-be sitters. Bloggs extended his premises and took on another operator. The formal photographs of Lady Pamela were mixed with snapshots of her ladyship in public, Bloggs being an expert in supplying backgrounds and in the gentle art of photo-faking. The singular resemblance of these photographs of Lady Pamela to a young man about town was almost uncommented upon. Nevertheless a certain charming young lady, Miss Madge Brinton of the Regency Theatre, thought the likeness positively uncanny. She had known Algy Mott some time, and

although aware that he was an amateur actor who had been famous at Cambridge for his impersonation of soubrettes, it could hardly occur to her to connect Lady Pamela Entwistle with the talented youth of the University Amateur Dramatic Club.

All the same, one afternoon, after Algy had spent several strenuous hours at Bloggs's

Lady Pamela Entwistle and party watching yesterday's exciting polo at Ranelagh.
(From the "Looking-Glass.")

studio, she could not help exclaiming when they met at a fashionable teashop: "Algy, you never told me you were related to this Lady Pamela Entwistle the newspapers are making so much fuss about!"

III.

LADY PAM was in her third month, and still no one had arisen to expose the hoax.

"Algy," remarked Bellamy one day, "I've been thinking that when the shooting season is over, we'll have to do something enterprising."

By this time Lady Pamela's vogue was beginning, if not to frighten Algy Mott, at least to make him very uncomfortable. In his opinion, the joke was being carried too far.

"Something enterprising!" he echoed. "Look here, the first thing we know, we'll jolly well find ourselves up against the police!"

"How utterly absurd! Police, indeed. There's no law against invention, is there?" queried Bellamy.

"No law?" returned Mott. "Why, there's every law. What are forgery, perjury, arson, bigamy, and the rest but the simple result of the inventive impulse? It's being too clever by half to create a corpse, a bank balance, a bonfire, and a second wife, as you'll jolly well discover, if you try it."

Bellamy laughed joyously. "Lady Pam," he cried, "is a work of art."

"So is a forged bank-note!"

"Heavens, what a comparison! Think of Lady Pam's subjective beauty, her ascriptive vivacity, her imputed nobility, her universally-acknowledged charm. *What* a woman! What an invention! And to be compared to a spurious bank-note! No, no, we're public benefactors, Algy. We've supplied the world with an ideal. We've added to the gaiety of nations. But the season is losing. Lady Pam mustn't rest on her laurels. Mere charm will not save her. She must *do* something. So I am going to send her to Arabia."

"I wish you'd send her to Jericho."

"My cousin George," pursued Bellamy, "who is stationed at Aden, has sent me a parcel of Kodak films to develop. Bloggs

says they'll make perfectly ripping backgrounds for Lady Pam's Eastern adventures. There are any number of desert scenes and nomad people with camels, palms, figs, olives, etcetera. Just look at this list, Algy, will you ? "

Mott reluctantly took a sheet of paper rom Bellamy, and read :—

Lady Pamela interviewing Bedouin chief.

Lady Pamela and her favourite camel.

Lady Pamela and her armed escort halt for breakfast.

" Camel ? " murmured Mott, disgustedly.

" Only a few snapshots at the Zoo, dear boy. Just for the position, you know. Claxton is sending round some natty little harem costumes. I said natty—not naughty. You've no idea how fetching they'll look. This stunt will be the greatest thing Lady Pam's done yet."

IV.

A FORTNIGHT later Mott sought his friend Bellamy.

" Dick," he said, " I'm afraid you won't like what I have to say. I'm about fed up with this Entwistle spoof. I've proposed to Madge Brinton, and she and I are going to be married. I've told her everything, of course, and she's properly shocked. She says it was all very well for me to dress up as a girl in my Cambridge A.D.C. days, but this Lady Pamela business is going too far. I won't tell you what *she* calls it, but, anyhow, she insists that I must chuck the whole thing. If you're not sick of it yourself, you must get someone else to pose for Lady Pamela."

" What confounded squeamishness ! " cried Bellamy. " You are going to smash up the most original invention of the century just when it was achieving its finest triumph. But at least you'll let Lady Pam disappear gradually. What about that batch of backgrounds of Monte Carlo and the Riviera only waiting for the central figure ? "

" No good, Dick," said Mott, firmly; " I've given my promise, I tell you. I ought to have stopped it long ago. I never dreamt you were going so far. If you want to go on with it, you must try someone else."

Bellamy was furious at what he called Mott's treachery, but at length he cooled down.

" Very well," he said, with a rueful grin, " if you won't go on with the joke, you won't. It's been tremendous fun while it lasted, and it's nearly paid all my debts. Your backing out decides me to accept an offer I had the other day from an old pal and go out to the Argentine."

" My congratulations," cried Mott, immensely relieved.

" Mine first," said Bellamy, extending his hand. " When is it to be—the happy day ? "

Algy told him that for family reasons he and Miss Brinton were to be married quietly by special licence in a fortnight's time.

" So soon ? Well, best of luck, my boy. I'll be on my way to Buenos Ayres by then. I must think up a suitable wedding present. All the same, I'm sorry about Lady Pam. I'd like to have continued that a bit longer. But she's too dull without pictures. Too much brain-work ! "

Lady Pamela Entwistle gave a small dinner party yesterday at the Ritz. Several well-known society leaders were present.

(From " Society's Realm.")

The two conspirators parted with a laugh, and Mott only saw Bellamy once again before he sailed.

"Thank goodness," he murmured, "that joke's over. Lady Pamela will stay in Arabia now, as far as I'm concerned. And Bloggs has other fish to fry."

But his relief was premature. For it so happened that on the day before Algy's marriage, most of the London newspapers and news agencies received a mysterious little communication on Mayfair Club note-paper to the following effect :—

Lady Pamela Entwistle, who has just returned to England from a journey in Arabia, is to be married at the Hanover Street Register Office at 11 *a.m. to-morrow (Thursday). The bridegroom is Mr. Algernon W. Mott, M.C.*

In consequence of this intelligence, at a fairly early hour the precincts of the Register Office began to exhibit unwonted animation. Individuals of restless disposition, mostly with cameras in their hands, prowled to and fro or lounged expectant on the kerb. A couple of agitated cinematographers lurked at the contiguous street corners.

Wholly unconscious of the reception awaiting them, Algy and Miss Brinton drew up in a taxi-cab. They alighted and found themselves in the middle of a dense throng. Camera shutters snapped in a dozen different directions. Luckily, the bride had provided herself with a veil. A good-natured policeman piloted them across the pavement into the Register Office. They heard excited, half-suppressed ejaculations :—

"There she is!" "That's 'er. Lady Pamela." "My word, ain't she pretty, now? Younger'n I thought."

Once inside the building, a polite clerk handed Miss Brinton two or three telegrams and letters, and indicated a rather heavy parcel addressed to her, which Algy vaguely noticed was in Captain Bellamy's handwriting. But they were both too agitated to open them. Their anxiety was to get through the ceremony as quickly as possible. The registrar, noticing their distress, contrived in the end to let them out a back way, and thus they escaped a repetition of the ordeal.

The delightful weather brought many out into the Row yesterday morning. Lady Pamela Entwistle, shown above, was one of the earliest to enjoy a good canter.
(*From "Society Jottings."*)

"This," cried Algy, in disgust, "this is that cad Bellamy's doing."

IN a secluded corner of the spacious corridors of the Hotel Continental, Paris, Mr. and Mrs. Mott feverishly scanned an assortment of the London journals of the day before. There were photographs and paragraphs headed, "Marriage of Lady Pamela Entwistle," "Society Favourite's Surprise Wedding," and so forth.

"It's a perfectly beastly trick, Madge! What ought we to do?"

"It was certainly rather spiteful, dear. But the pictures of me are not bad. You ought, first of all, to send a proper notice of our wedding to the *Times*."

"Righto!" agreed Algy, and turned away to write it. Madge thought of yesterday's letters and congratulatory telegrams, which they had completely forgotten. When Algy found her she was in pensive mood, with a huge, nicely-bound volume of newspaper cuttings in her lap. It was Captain Bellamy's wedding present which they had brought away from the Register Office. It contained several hundreds of references, anecdotes, and pictures of Lady Pamela Entwistle. On the flyleaf was written :—

To Mrs. Algernon Mott.
The dying gift of Pamela Entwistle, in remembrance of the latter's comparatively short but exciting career.

There was also a card inscribed "Captain R. F. Bellamy," with the address: "Mayfair Club, W."

"Algy," murmured the young bride, "I shall probably have a good deal of time on my hands when we get back and you go into Uncle Henry's office. This book, for which we should be very grateful to Captain Bellamy, seems to contain all the material we shall want for Baxter and Co."

"Baxter and Co.?" echoed the mystified Algy. "Who the deuce are they?"

But without paying any attention to his query, his wife went on in a rapt manner.

"You must, of course, wire them to contradict the report of Lady Pamela's return to England and marriage to you. She is ill—very ill—in Arabia. All her papers were, however, sent on before her illness to us for publication. And say their offer is accepted."

"Offer is accepted? Whose offer? What offer?"

His wife came out of her trance.

"Forgive me, darling, I forgot. This letter is, I suppose, really for you." She sprang up brightly, and pressed a single quarto sheet, typewritten, into her husband's hand. Algy took it, and read:—

Dear Madam,

In view of your marriage and reported intention of retirement abroad, you have probably considered the writing of your Reminiscences.

As we feel that these would enjoy a wide popularity, we are prepared to offer your Ladyship the sum of £1,000 for the copyright of same. If you entertain this offer, will you kindly wire us your acceptance? We hope, at least, for the refusal of the MS.

We are, dear madam,

Yours faithfully,

BAXTER & CO., LTD.

[*The illustrations are from photographs by E. O. Hoppé.*]

ACROSTICS.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 118.

(*The Second of the Series.*)

LENIN and Trotsky probably take pride
In epithets like these on either side.

1. A bursting tear, a Roman requiem,
A sleeper old and lorn—make light of them!

2. Brings radiant light, or numbness and the dark:
The twin initials shun, the central mark.

3. A vale of Eden, set in Western land,
That for red heat or livid cold may stand.

4. Outpace the ruck, your rivals all get past;
Put out the first, and put off all the last.

5. Soft airs were hers, and rivers running gold,
Richer than Crœsus; purple webs she sold.

6. Callous, insensitive to every smart,
A slimy snaky creature at the heart.

7. Candid and virile, sordid, purple-barred,
Pretext for boys, for victors golden-starred.

8. Child of a mother ignorant of law,
Whose fingers fashioned what his mind foresaw.

9. A double foursome, to an octave blent,
Bids Bashan try a short advertisement.

10. The bridal blossom oft bears bitter fruit;
Still into fragrance sweet may that transmute.

11. One stirred behind it once, and straight was slain;
Thousands before it stirred, and died in pain.

12. A festive scene of "revelry by night,"
And next discomfiture and headlong flight.

13. The bold attempt Mount Everest to scale
Without these burden-bearers needs must fail.

EDI.

Answers to Acrostic No. 118 should be addressed to the Acrostic Editor, THE STRAND MAGAZINE, *Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C.2, and must arrive not later than by the first post on May 10th.*

To every light one alternative answer may be sent; it should be written at the side. At the foot of his answer every solver should write his pseudonym and nothing else.

ANSWER TO DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 117.

1.	H	arro	W
2.	A	lph	A
3.	S	tar	T
4.	T	riangl	E
5.	I	mitato	R
6.	N	ata	L
7.	G	rott	O
8.	S	ol	O

NOTES.—Light 7. Watteau. 8. Polo.

In No. 115, "Organoplastic" is admitted for the fourth light, and "Expansion" for the third.

TWENTY-FIRST SERIES: RESULT.

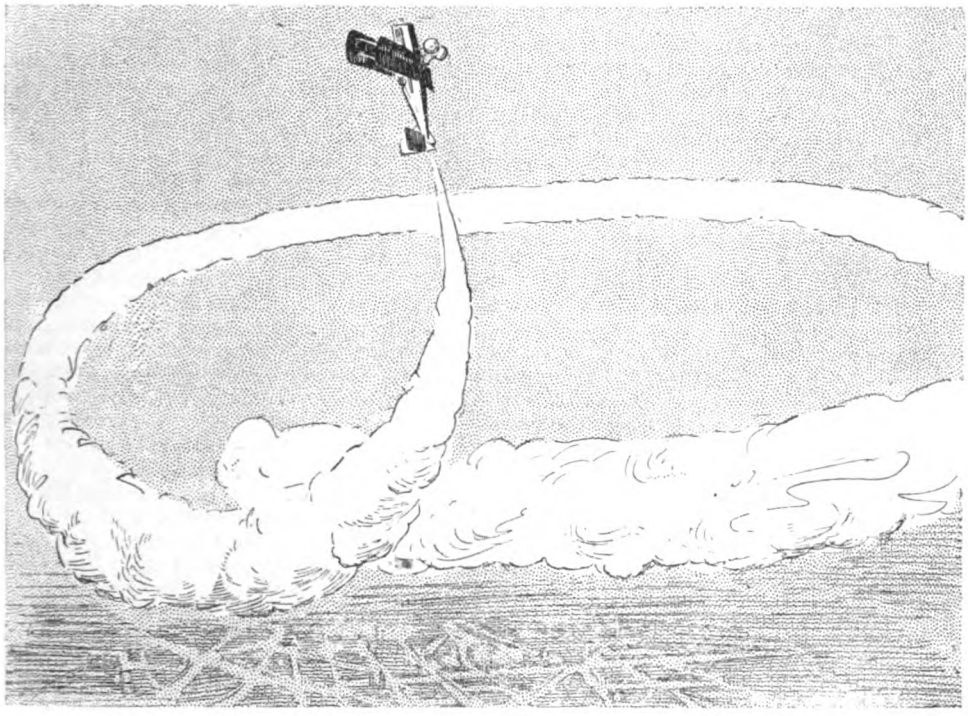
The extra acrostic proved sufficiently difficult. No solver was entirely correct: the third light was found by eight competitors, and the fourth by only three; the last two lights proved quite easy, but the uprights were elusive. Ten competitors missed one light only, and will share the prizes, each one winning £1 5s. 3d.; they will also be ineligible for prizes in the twenty-second series.

The prize-winners are: Beggar, Mr. B. G. Pearce, 5, Ethelbert Road, Bromley, Kent; Franz, Lady Young, Lerryn, Weybridge, Surrey; Junius, Mr. F. C. W. Grigson, Amesbury, Hindhead; Lemma, Mr. D. M. Campbell, Silverhow, Grasmere, Westmorland; Manora, Mr. G. W. Sealy, 19, Redcliffe Gardens, S.W.10; Reg, Mr. H. Lees, 3, Campden House Chambers, W.8; Rewop, Mr. R. P. Coulson, 41, Chatsworth Road, Brondesbury, N.W.2; Silex, Mr. J. L. Wolferstan, 5, Princess Square, Plymouth; Vinjo, Mrs. C. B. Keston, 33a, Hogarth Road, S.W.5; Yoko, Mr. F. Rawson, 10, Richmond Mansions, Earl's Court, S.W.5.

ANSWER TO THE EXTRA ACROSTIC.

1.	T	ouc	H
2.	A	v	E
3.	P	isa	N
4.	L	ome	L
5.	O	utgrab	E
6.	W	averle	Y

NOTES.—Light 1. Hutch, clutch, Dutch. 2. Tennyson, "In Memoriam," lvii. 3. R. Browning, Luria, II., 2. Light 4. Philomel; Phi, Greek letter; Milo, Melos. 5. Mother, Sam; Uncle Sam; momo rathe. Lewis Carroll, Through the Looking Glass. 6. Waverley; or, 'Tis sixty years since.



The author of the article making the letter "Q."

SKY-WRITING

by DEREK SHEPPERSON

SKY-WRITING is more than advertising. It is broadcasting publicity. Executed on such an immense scale and with such striking effect, it forces public attention. When a word or group of words is traced out right across the breadth of a city and remains suspended in mid-air, one may safely say that ninety-five per cent. of those in the streets below will be as certain of seeing the smoke words as they would be of hearing a gun go off in the next street.

Several people who have never witnessed a sky-writing demonstration—there are not many in England now who have not— have asked: "How do you know that the people in the town below will look up and see what you are doing?" Well, there are two answers to that. First, practical experience shows that the majority of people are already gazing at the writing above before so much as the first letter has been completed. Secondly, if you would care to prove the matter yourself, try standing in the middle of the pavement of your town and staring up at the sky. If within a couple of minutes you have not gathered round you a large and curious crowd all gazing earnestly heavenwards with you, and if more than half the rest of the street are not also shooting puzzled glances skywards, you may consider yourself in the midst of a most exceptional community of citizens. Anyway, you probably do as it is.

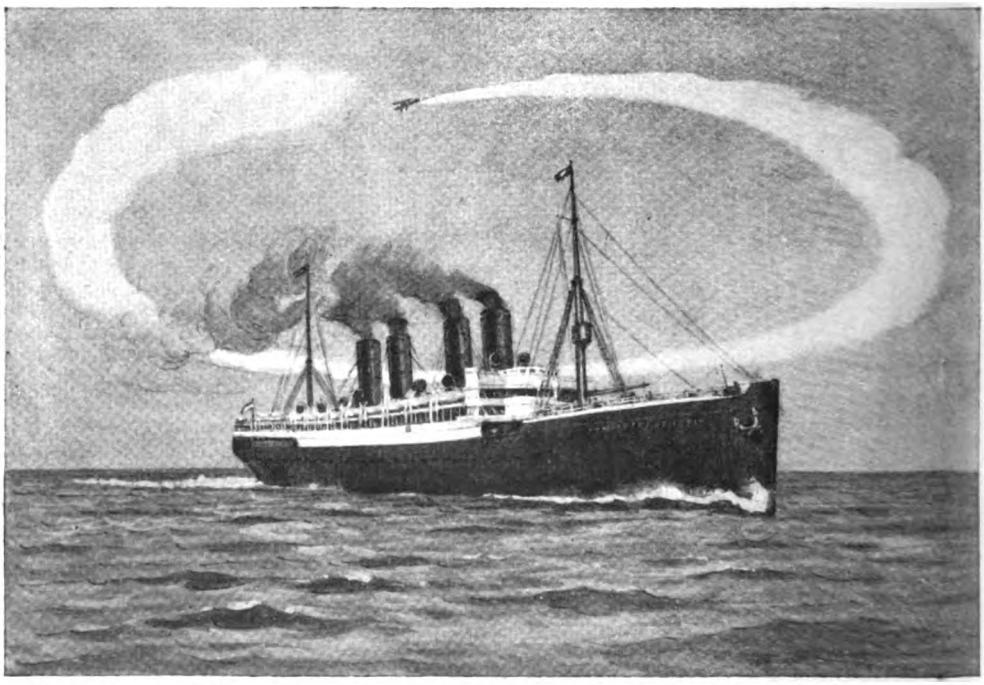
That is why everybody in the streets sees a sky-writing demonstration, and tells everyone who was indoors and did not see it all about it afterwards. Consequently, one such demonstration will reach a bigger public than any other single form of publicity. In realizing this fact, in picturing the effect and labouring for years to achieve the successful results finally attained, Major J. Savage was able to make a practical

proposition of what had hitherto been considered a romantic flight of fancy. Nearly a year ago he patented the invention all over the world, and the first public demonstration was made.

So much for the value, objects, and, in fact, *raison d'être* of sky-writing. The commercial value of Major Savage's big enterprise was proved immediately the first demonstration was given, and his faith in the invention was endorsed by the biggest men in the City. The romance of the business side of sky-writing would make a long and interesting narrative in itself. Suffice it to say that within an incredibly short time contracts were booked covering a period of years, whilst inquiries poured in from every part of the globe.

But to arrange contracts and design a mechanism which will throw out from the tail of an aeroplane a quarter of a million cubic feet of dense white smoke per second does not complete the job. To put the completed theory on a practicable basis required three things—(1) a particular type of aeroplane, the exceptional efficiency of which would not be impaired by the alterations and modifications the exigencies of sky-writing demanded; (2) a specialized form of flying which, in effect, amounted almost to an art; (3) the study of meteorological conditions affecting visibility and performance from the widely divergent viewpoints of the sky-writer and the spectator.

The aeroplane finally selected for the purpose was a very powerful little single-seater scout, of minute proportions compared to its engine, which develops over two hundred horse-power. This type is British-designed and constructed, and was chosen as being practically the only available type in existence which would fulfil all the conditions required of it, and be at the same time a suitable commercial proposition. Exceptional power was needed in order that it should be able to climb up to a considerable height in a reasonably short time. It had to be very fast in order to write, in the short space of a few minutes, words that span a distance of miles with letters anything up to half a mile in size. This can be better understood when you realize that the length of the actual smoke trail used for a moderate-sized advertisement, if stretched out in one long line, would reach from Dover to Calais. Finally, this little scout had to be capable of being stunted unmercifully, so that it had to be stalwart and capable of being manœuvred with great dexterity and rapidity.



This gigantic "O" being written round an Atlantic liner is the same size as the letters used in sky-writing, and enables one to realize the enormous proportions of the words which look so small from below.

Sky-writing is done in the reverse way to that in which it is seen from below, and in this picture the pilot, having completed the word "sky," is just commencing "writing."

Sky-writing, as an art in this wider sense, is a most interesting, and at first somewhat bewildering, study. Once the sky-writer starts in on the actual writing the execution and arrangement of the intricate smoke design from the memorized picture he carries in his mind so entirely absorbs his attention as to necessitate the actual handling of his machine being purely instinctive. This, in itself, is not difficult, as

an experienced pilot almost invariably flies by instinct and touch, just in the same manner as the experienced motorist will guide his car without conscious effort through the most tortuous intricacies of traffic.

The object and aim of the pilot when writing is to complete the word or words legibly in such a way that they are most advantageously seen by the spectators below, whilst being written in the shortest possible space of time. He chooses the position from which he will start with reference to the direction and speed of the wind, the position of the sun, the area his writing will cover, and the corresponding location of the spectators. His own memory-picture is of the words as they would appear in a mirror—that is, reversed—for he must write in this topsy-turvy way for those who are looking up from below to read it the right way round. Not only must he memorize the exact shape and sequence of every letter, but he must also have worked out accurately how he is to approach each letter in turn. There is no time, when once started, to study instruments and plans or sketches. The appearance of the whole completed result must be committed to memory, executed at racing speed, and completed correctly without a break or breathing space to think of what comes next. You cannot run back and rub out a mistake, so the whole thing must be right first time or the result will not only have been spoiled, but will appear ridiculous from below. When a few months ago Captain Turner wrote "Hello, U.S.A." over New York, it would have been somewhat embarrassing if he had found out afterwards that he had forgotten the "o" in the first word.

Proportion and alignment are the next two points the sky-writer must study. The letters must not merely be the right shape and equally spaced, but must be kept the same size and not grow or dwindle like a family of ducks waddling a constitutional in single file through the farm-yard. To keep all the letters in correct alignment is not a very simple task. It is one thing to write a neat note with pen on paper, but quite another to keep a five-mile word in a straight and sober path. When you are twisting and turning and whirling around in all directions two miles up in the air, it is no easy matter to find a prominent object on the ground and keep your eye on it.

As to the meteorological problems, they are a necessary evil to the sky-writer, an engrossingly interesting subject to the expert, and probably a matter of umbrella or no umbrella to you. So we will not dwell long on these.

The main point with the weather is that blue sky and sky-writing are inseparable. This is not because the smoke is white and will show up best against the blue sky, because black smoke could be used equally well; but rather that an absolutely steady air flow can only be found above the clouds or where there are no clouds. As it would be unremunerative to sky-write above the clouds for only the dicky-birds to see, we select clear days for our operations.

The wind is a problem that must also be carefully studied, but does not present the difficulties generally attributed to it. So long as it blows steadily and not in gusts, as is usually the case at altitudes over seven or eight thousand feet, it will not disperse the smoke writing. But as the wind usually increases rapidly as one ascends, its strength and direction must be reckoned accurately, especially as the direction changes enormously at various altitudes. If one did not make allowances for these things one would often find the result of one's labours not drifting over the town below, but careering off with the wind in the opposite direction.

A POINT that is practically impossible to decide without making actual tests at the time is the length of time over which a written phrase will be legible—at least, this is so as far as the British Isles are concerned. Our climatic conditions are so variable that one can never prophesy whether the writing will be dispersed in a few minutes or remain readable for an hour. It is not a matter of the wind; for on some occasions sky-writing has been legible for over an hour and, at the same time, drifted across the town for which the demonstration was intended to another, more than a dozen miles away, and farther on again, till it was lost on the horizon.

One thing that is not altogether unpleasing is the fact that sky-writing in conception and execution is wholly and exclusively British. America has hitherto led us in the matter of advertisement, but sky-writing, which in little more than six months was witnessed by over thirty millions in these isles, and has taken a firm grip on the Continent and in America, is this time a feather in the British cap.

TETHERSTONES

by

ETHEL M. DELL

ILLUSTRATED BY
P. B. HICKLING

SYNOPSIS OF THE FIRST INSTALMENT.

MONTAGUE ROTHERBY, just home from an expedition in Central Africa, is staying with his uncle, Dr. Rotherby, the Bishop of Burminster. He notices that the Bishop's secretary, Frances Thorold, is very near a breakdown in health through overwork, and is not surprised when she faints one morning during lunch. He helps to restore her, and in a conversation in the garden late that evening learns something of her position. This conversation is interrupted by the Bishop, who comes upon them in the moonlight.

"As I thought!" he said. "As I might have known! You may come out of your hiding-place. No subterfuge will serve either of you. Go—both of you! Let me never see you again!"

Montague Rotherby, who is thinking of writing a book on his travels, had already offered to engage Frances as his secretary, and on the Bishop's outburst she takes lodgings in a Devon village to restore her health before entering on her new duties. Here Montague discovers her. He explains that he is not yet ready to commence his book, and goes on to declare his passionate love for her.

"Don't you know what I mean, you wonderful woman? Haven't you known from the very beginning—you Circe—you enchantress?"

In a moment he had her against his breast. She did not resist him. That he should love her! Ah, the marvel of it—and the gladness that was like to pain!

PART I. (*continued*).

CHAPTER VII.

ROGER.

IT was like a dream—yet not a dream. Over and over again she marvelled afresh at the wonder of it, lying on the hard little bed in her room with the sloping roof, watching the misty stars through their long night march.

They had parted—somehow he had torn himself away, she could not remember how. She only remembered that after he had gone he had returned to the window and said to her, laughing, "Why not come up on to the moor and do sacrifice to the high gods with me?"

And she had answered, also laughing, tremulously, "Oh, no, really I couldn't bear any more to-night. Besides, it is misty—we might be lost."

"I should like to be lost with you," he had answered, and had gone away laughing.

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There had been something wild and Pan-like in his laugh. It was the laugh of the conqueror, and she tingled to the memory of it, thrilling like a delicate instrument to the hand of a skilled player. He had waked in her such music as none had ever waked in her before. She did not know herself any longer. This throbbing, eager creature was a being wholly different from the Frances Thorold of her knowledge, just as the man who had laughed and vanished like Pan into the mist had a personality wholly apart from that somewhat cynical but kindly gentleman who was Montague Rotherby.

What magic had wrought the change in them? What moorland spell was this, holding them as surely as a net about their feet? She was as one on the threshold of an enchanted world, afraid not so much of the unknown that lay before her as of the desert that lay behind—that desert which she had so miraculously quitted for this place of amazing gladness.

Once in the night she arose and went to the little cottage window, since sleep was impossible. It came to her there as she stood gazing up at those far dim stars to breathe a deep thanksgiving for this strange deliverance. But the words she sought to utter would not come. The vague mist, floating like smoke, seemed to cling about her soul. She stood speechless, and so standing, she heard a voice, denunciatory, fanatical, speak suddenly within.

"I tell you to go, because I cannot stop your sinning until you have endured your hell and—if God is merciful—begun to work out your own salvation."

So clearly fell the words upon her consciousness that she felt as if they had been uttered by her side. She almost turned to see who spoke. Then, remembering, a sharp shudder went through her. She shrank and caught her breath as though she had been pierced.

Was this the magic that had caught her—the awful magic of temptation? Was there poison in the draught which she had drunk with such avidity? This enchanted land to which she had come after weary years of desert journeying, was this to prove—her hell?

As if stricken with blindness, she stumbled back into the room and lay down. All her former doubts swept over her afresh in a black cataract of misgiving. Love her—faded and tired and dull? How could he love her? What could a man of his sort, rich, popular, successful, see in a woman of hers save an easy prey? She lay and burned in the darkness. And she had given him all he asked in that amazing surrender. She had opened to him her very soul. Wherefore? Ah, indeed, wherefore? Because he had overwhelmed her with the audacity of his desire! For no other reason—no other reason! How could this thing be Love?

So she lay, chastizing herself with the scorpions of shame and fear and desolation—because she had dared to dream that Love could ever come to her. At last—in that terrible vigil—she found words wherewith to pray, and in an agony of supplication she made her prayer: "O God, keep me from making a mistake! Let me die sooner! Let me die!"

And though no answer came to her then, tears came instead and washed the burning anguish away. Afterwards she slept.

IN the morning she awoke to see the sun drawing up the mist like a veil from the green earth. All the evils of the night were gone. She arose, wondering at the emotions that had so torn her a few hours before. After all, if she kept her soul with steadfastness, what had she to fear? She viewed the strange event of the previous evening with a curious sense of detachment, almost as if it had happened to another person very far removed from herself. She was calm now, calm and strong and no longer afraid. The habit of years had reasserted itself. She girt herself anew in the armour which till then had never failed her. Work was her safeguard as well as her necessity. She would waste no further time in idleness.

After breakfast she set forth on a three-mile tramp to the nearest town to buy a newspaper, promising herself to spend the afternoon answering advertisements. About a mile from the village, on the edge of a deep combe through which flowed the babbling stream of her sketch, she came to the farm called Tetherstones, and here somewhat to her surprise, she was joined by the dog, Roger. He bounded to her, his brown eyes beaming good fellowship through his shaggy hair, and at once and quite unmistakably announced his intention of accompanying her. No amount of reasoning or discouragement on her part had the smallest effect upon his resolution. Beaming and jolly, he refused to pay any attention to either, having evidently decided to take a day off and spend it in what he regarded as congenial society. She found it impossible to hide from him the fact that she loved his kind, and he obviously considered her honest attempt to do so as a huge joke, laughing whenever she spoke in a fashion so disarming that she was very soon compelled to admit herself defeated.

Then went on together, therefore, Roger with many eager excursions into the heather,

till Tetherstones was left far behind. Then, at last, Frances, growing weary, sat down to rest, and Roger came, panting but still cheery, to lie beside her.

She fondled his beautiful shaggy head with an understanding touch. "What a funny fellow you are," she said, "to follow me like this!"

Roger smiled at her, his tongue hanging between his pearly teeth, and laid a damp, podgy paw upon her lap. She understood him to express his warm appreciation of the company in which he found himself.

"They'll think I've run away with you," she said.

And he shook his ears with a nonchalance that said very plainly that it was no concern of his what they thought.

Then there came a tramp of hoofs along the white, sandy track, and she saw a man on horseback coming towards them through the glare. Roger sat up sharply, and, gulping, ceased to pant.

She saw that his eyes were fixed upon the advancing horseman, though he made no movement to leave her side. The thud of the approaching hoofs had a dull, fateful sound to her ears. She experienced an odd desire to rise and plunge deep into the heather to avoid an encounter. But the tenseness of the dog by her side seemed to hold her also motionless. She waited with a strange expectancy.

The dazzling sunshine made it impossible for her to see what manner of man the rider was until he was abreast of her. Then she realized that he was broad and heavy of build. He wore a cap drawn down over his eyes.

The sudden checking of the horse made her start. "Roger!" a deep voice said. "What the devil are you doing here?"

Roger started also, and she felt a quiver as of guilt run through him. He got up with an apologetic air, and stood wagging his funny stump of a tail ingratiatingly.

It seemed to Frances that even the horse looked apologetic, halted there at his master's behest.

"Roger!" the new-comer said again. Roger's tail dipped and became invisible in the bushy hair of his hindquarters. He crept forward with a slinking air as if he yearned for a deep hole in which to bury himself.

The man on horseback waited quite motionless till the dog reached his foot, then suddenly he leaned down and struck him a stinging cut with his riding-whip.

The dog cried out and fled to a distance, and Frances, her hands gripped in the heather on both sides of her, uttered an involuntary exclamation.

The horseman, preparing to go on, paused. "Did you speak, madam?" he asked, scowling at her from under the peak of his cap.

She collected herself and rose to the occasion. "No! There are no words for a thing of that sort," she said, icily contemptuous.

He put up a hand, ironically courteous, and saluted her. She saw the hard line of a very prominent jaw as he rode on.

The dog fell in behind and meekly followed him.

"What a bear!" said Frances. "I suppose that is the owner of Tetherstones. Or—no! Someone said that was an old man. Then this must be his son!"

She arose and pursued her way, a grim sense of amusement succeeding her annoyance. How curious it was of people to go out of their way to be objectionable! They so seldom injured anyone except themselves in the process.

She had not thought that a walk across the moors would have tired her overmuch, but the day was hot and she very soon realized that she would need a considerable rest before returning. She had breakfasted early and none too bountifully, and she had brought no refreshment with her, counting on obtaining it when she reached her destination at Fordestown.

But Fordestown was a long way off, farther than she had anticipated, and she began after a while to wonder if she had done wisely in attempting the walk. She felt lonely after Roger had left her. The great spaces of the moors had a bewildering effect upon her tired senses. The solitude weighed upon her.

Then, after what seemed an endless period of walking, she came to a cross-track with no indication as to whither the branching by-path led. There was no habitation in sight, no sign of life beyond that of the larks singing interminably in the blazing blue overhead, no possibility of knowing in which direction she ought to turn.

Her heart began to fail her a little, and she sat down again to consider the problem. The whir of grasshoppers arose in a ceaseless hum around her. The distant hills swam before her aching vision. She sank deep into the scented heather and closed her eyes.

She had meant to give herself only the briefest rest, but she was in a place where Nature reigned supreme, and Nature proved too much for her. Her lids were sealed almost immediately. The hum of insects became a vague lullaby to her jaded nerves. She slipped deeper and deeper into a sea of slumber that took her and bore her with soft billowings into an ocean of oblivion.

She slept as a child sleeps—as she had not slept for years—the soul as it were loosed from the body—her whole being perfectly at rest.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE ROAD TO NOWHERE.

OFTEN she wondered afterwards how long that sleep would have lasted if it had been left to Nature to awake her. It was so deep, so dreamless, so exquisite in its utter restfulness. She had never slept thus in the open before. The magic of the moors had never so possessed her. And she had been so weary. All the weariness of the weary years seemed to go to the making of that amazing sleep of hers in the heather. She was just a child of Nature too tired for further effort. She slept for hours, and she would have slept for hours longer, but for the interruption.

It came to her very suddenly, so suddenly that it seemed to her that the soul had scarcely time to gird itself anew in the relaxed body before the amazing battle was upon her. She sprang upright in the heather, gasping, still trammelled in the meshes of sleep, defenceless, to find the day nearly spent and a curtain of mist surrounding her; and within that curtain, most terribly alone with her, she also found Montague Rotherby.

Her recognition of him came with a choking cry. She realized that he had only just reached her, that his coming must have called her back from that deep oblivion in which she had been so steeped. But that first sight of him—alone with her—alone with her—within that strangely shifting yet impenetrable curtain—showed her something which to her waking vision—made keen by that long spell of rest—was appalling. She was terrified in that moment, as she could not remember that she had ever been terrified before.

He bent over her. "Found!" he said, and laughed with a triumph that seemed to stab her. "I've had a long hunt for you. Have you been hiding here all day?"

"No," she said, through lips that felt strangely stiff, compelling her voice with difficulty. "I lost my way. I fell asleep. I am just going to Fordestown."

"Going to Fordestown! Why, it's miles away! Why didn't you wait till I came to you? You knew I should come."

His voice had a caressing quality. It drew her against her judgment. Her wild, unreasoning fear subsided somewhat. She smiled at him, though still her lips felt stiff.

"I expected to be back by that time," she said. "I started quite early."

"But why did you start at all?" he said.

He was still bending over her. She gave him her hands with a slight gesture of appeal to help her up. He took them and drew her upwards into his arms.

Holding her so, in spite of her quick effort for freedom, he looked deeply into her eyes. "Tell me why you went!" he said.

She hesitated, trying to avert her face.

"No, that won't help you," he said, frustrating her. "Tell me!"

Unwillingly she answered him. "I had

a bad night, and I decided—in the morning—that—I had better look for work."

"Why did you decide that?" he said.

She made a more determined stand against him. "I can't tell you. It's natural, isn't it? I have always been independent."

"Till you met me," he said.

She summoned her courage and faced him,

though she knew that she was crimson and quivering. "I shall go on being independent," she said, "until we are married."

She expected some subtle change of countenance, possibly some sign of discomfiture, as thus boldly she took her stand. But at once he defeated her expectations. He met her announcement with complete composure. He even smiled, drawing her closer.

"Oh, I think not," he said. "After what happened yesterday we won't talk nonsense of that kind to-day. What is the matter, sweetheart? Has someone been troubling you?"

She relaxed somewhat. It was impossible not to respond to the tenderness of his voice and touch. But he had not satisfied her; the misgiving remained.

"Only my own mind—my own reason," she confessed, still painfully seeking to avoid his look.

"After—yesterday!" he said. The reproach of his tone pierced her. She hid her face against his breast.

He waited quite motionless till the dog reached his foot, then suddenly he leaned down and struck him a stinging cut with his riding-whip.

"I couldn't help it. You must make allowances. There has been no time for—love-making—in my life."

"There's time now," he said, and again she heard in his voice the note of triumph

that had so deeply disquieted her. "It's not a bit of good trying to run away at this stage. You're caught before you start."

"Ah!" she said.

He held her fast. "Do you realize that?"

She was silent.

He held her faster still. "Frances! Put your arms round my neck and tell me—tell me you are mine!"

She shrank, hiding her face more deeply. He had lulled her distrust, but he had not gained her confidence.

"You won't?" he said.

"I can't," she whispered back.

He felt for her face and turned it upwards. "You will presently," he said, and, bending, kissed her, holding her lips with his till she broke free with a mingled sense of shame and self-reproach.

"What is it?" he said, watching her, and she thought his face hardened. "You have changed since yesterday. Why?"

She laid a pleading hand upon his arm. Yes, she had changed; she could not deny it. But she could not tell him why.

"I think we have been—rather headlong," was all she found to say.

And at that he laughed, easily, cajoling her. "Well, we've gone too far to pull up now. Perhaps it will be a lesson to you next time, what? But no more of your will-o'-the-wisp performances on this occasion, O lady mine! We'll play the game, and as we have begun, so we will go on."

He kissed her again, and his kiss was almost a challenge.

"Don't you realize that I love you?" he said. "Do you think I am going to lie awake all night for you, and then not hold you in my arms when we meet?"

He laughed as he uttered the question, but it had a passionate ring. His lean, sunburnt face had a drawn look that oddly touched her pity. She was even moved to compunction.

"I am sorry," she said. "I thought—perhaps—it was just—a passing fancy."

"My fancies don't pass like that," said Montague.

He spoke almost moodily, as if she had hurt him, and again her heart smote her.

"I am beginning to understand," she said. "But—you must give me time. We hardly know each other yet."

"That is soon remedied," he said. "I warn you, I am not a very patient person. There is nothing to wait for that I can see."

"Oh, we must wait," she said. "We must wait."

He broke again into that odd laugh of his. "We won't wait. Life is too short." He stooped again to kiss her. "You amazing woman!" he said. "Do you really prefer stones to bread?"

SHE could not answer him. He had her defeated, powerless. She had no weapons with which to oppose him. But still, deep in her heart, the doubt and the wonder remained. Was this indeed love that had come to her? If so, why was she thus afraid?

Yet she met his lips with her own, for somehow he made her feel that she owed it to him.

"That's better," he said, when he suffered her to go again. "Now, what are your plans? Are you still wanting to go to Fordestown?"

She hesitated. "You say it is a long way?"

"It's miles," he said. "You are right out of your way. What made you wander up here?"

"They told me it was a short cut across the moor," she said.

He laughed. "Ah, these short cuts! Well, what are you going to do?"

She looked at him. "Do you know, I haven't had anything to eat all day, not since breakfast."

"Good heavens!" he said. "You've been wandering about the moor starving all this time?"

She smiled. His concern touched her. Not for years had anyone expressed any anxiety for her welfare.

"Not wandering about much," she said. "I got as far as this this morning, and then, while I was considering which way to go, I fell asleep." She glanced about her uneasily. "Do you think this fog is going to get any worse?"

"Oh, no!" he said, lightly. "It's nothing. They often come up like this in the evening. But look here! I can't have you starving. We had better make for Fordestown after all."

"But—is it far?" She still hesitated. "Do you know the way?"

"I know the direction. I can't say how far it is. But it is nearer than Brookside. There is a fairly decent inn there. I am staying there myself."

"Oh!" she said with relief. "Then if we can only get there, you can motor me back to Brookside."

"The point is to get there," said Montague.

"But you know the direction. Do let us start before it gets any worse! I am quite rested."

She spoke urgently, for he seemed inclined to linger. He turned at once.

"Yes. You must be famished. This is the way."

He drew her hand through his arm with decision and began to lead her up one of the sandy tracks.

The mist closed like smoke about them, and Frances felt it wet upon her face. "We seem to be in the clouds," she said.

"I think we are," said Montague.

"You are sure we are going right?" she said.

He laughed at her. "Of course we are going right. Don't you trust me?"

Trust him! The words sent a curious sensation through her. Did she trust him? Had she ever—save for that strange, delirious hour last night—really trusted him? She murmured something unintelligible, for she could not answer him in the affirmative. And Montague laughed again.

Looking back upon that walk later, it seemed to her that they must have covered miles. It was not easy going. The track was rough, sometimes stony, sometimes overgrown. She stumbled often from weariness and exhaustion; and still they went on endlessly over the moor. Always they seemed to be going uphill, and always the mist grew thicker. Here and there they skirted marshy ground, splashing through puddles of black water, and hearing the sound of running streams close at hand but invisible in the ever-thickening mist.

It began to grow dark, and at last Frances became really anxious. They had not spoken for a long time, merely plodding on in silent discomfort, when abruptly she gave voice to her misgivings.

"I am sure we are wrong. This path leads to nowhere."

"It leads to Fordestown," he declared, stubbornly, "if you keep on long enough."

"I don't think I can keep on much longer," she said.

"I told you it was miles," said Montague.

She heard the sullen note in his voice, and her heart sank. Progress was becoming increasingly difficult. Very soon they would not be able to see the path.

She stood still suddenly, obedient to an inner urging that would not be denied. "Oh, let us go back!" she said.

He pressed her arm to his side with sharp insistence and drew her on. "Don't be ridiculous! Do you want to spend the night on the open moor?"

"It is what I am afraid of," she said, desperately. "If we go back we can at least find the way eventually to Brookside. But this—oh, this is hopeless!"

"Don't be ridiculous!" he said again. "It is just possible that we have taken a wrong turn in this infernal fog, but it's bound to lead to somewhere. There are no roads in England that don't."

She yielded to him, feeling she had no choice. But her alarm was increasing with every step she took. It seemed to her that they were actually beginning to climb one of the tors! Now and again they stumbled against boulders, dimly seen. And it was growing very cold. The drifting fog had turned to rain. Her feet had been wet for some time, and now her clothes were clinging about her, heavy with damp. She felt chilled to the bone, and powerless—quite powerless—to do anything but go whither she was led.

It was as if her will-power were temporarily in abeyance. This man was her master, and she had no choice but to obey his behests. She began to move as one in a dream, dimly counting her halting footsteps, vaguely wondering how many more she would accomplish.

And then quite suddenly she seemed as it were to reach a point where endurance snapped. She pitched forward, against his supporting arm.

"I can't go," she cried out. "I can't go—any farther."

Her caught her as she fell. She was conscious of the brief physical comfort afforded by the warmth of his body as he held her. Then, oddly, over her head she heard him speak as if addressing someone beyond her. "That settles it," he said. "It's not my fault."

She knew that he lowered her to the ground, still holding her, and began to rub her numbed and powerless hands.

CHAPTER IX.

THE LIONS' DEN.

"FROM all evil and mischief, from sin, from the crafts and assaults of the devil——"

Someone was saying the words. Frances opened her eyes upon blank darkness, and knew that her own lips had uttered them. She was lying in some sort of shelter, though how she had come thither she had no notion. The rain was beating monotonously upon a roof of corrugated iron. She lay listening to it, feeling helpless as a prisoner clamped to the wall. And then another voice spoke in the darkness, and her heart stood still.

"That's right. You're better. Gad, what a fright you gave me! Now do stop raving! You're only tired and a bit faint."

"I am not—raving," she said. "I am only—I am only——" Again without her conscious volition she knew herself to be uttering those words she had heard: "From all evil and mischief, from sin, from the crafts and assaults of the devil——" She paused a moment, groping as it were for more; then: "Good Lord, deliver us!" she

said, and it was as if her soul were speaking in the darkness.

"Frances!" a voice cried sharply, and she stopped, stopped even her breathing, to listen. "Stop talking that absurd rot! Be sensible! Try to be sensible!"

"I am only—praying," she said.

"Well, don't! It isn't the time for saying prayers. I want you to attend to me. You know what has happened?"

His voice sounded curt and imperious. She peered into the darkness, wishing she could see his face.

"I don't know," she made answer, wonderingly. "How should I know?"

"I brought you here," he said. "You fainted."

"How stupid of me!" she murmured, apologetically.

"It was, rather." His voice was grim. "But you've got back your senses, and for Heaven's sake keep them! This is just an old cattle-shed on the moors, and it's all the shelter we shall get to-night."

"Oh!" said Frances, and in her voice dismay and relief were strangely mingled. It was better than the open moor. But yet—but yet——

He spoke again with a species of humorous ruefulness. "Here we are, and here we've got to stay! That damned fog has defeated us. We can't hope to move before morning."

"I wish we had a light," said Frances.

SHE was gradually getting a grasp of the situation, and though her body felt oddly heavy and her head strangely light, her wits were recovering their customary businesslike balance.

"I have got a few matches," said Montague. "Also a few cigarettes. Afraid it's useless to attempt a fire. We should only smoke ourselves out—and possibly fire the shed as well. The only comfort we have got is a little hay, and you are lying on it."

"Where are you?" she said.

"Here!" A hand suddenly touched her, and she started with involuntary shrinking. A great shivering came over her, and for a space she struggled to control her chattering teeth.

"You are cold," he said.

"Yes—dreadfully cold. But never mind! It—it's better than being out in the open, isn't it? You have no idea where we are?"

"I lost my way," he said, moodily.

She reached out to him a trembling hand, and realized that he was standing propped against the wall beside her. He stooped quickly, grasping her cold fingers.

"Frances, we've got to face it. You may as well give in to circumstances. We're both of us helpless."

His voice had an odd urgency. It was as if he pleaded with her.

"Oh, I quite realize that," she said, and she strove to force a practical note into her reply. "We've been very unlucky, but what can't be cured must be endured. We shall come through it somehow."

She would have removed her hand, despite the physical reluctance to relinquish the warmth of his, but he held it fast.

"You don't want me to go?" he said.

"Oh, no!" she returned, briskly. "I am not so selfish and unreasonable as that. We must just make the best of it. We must just—just——"

She broke off. Her teeth were chattering again, and in the effort to check them she forgot the words she was trying to utter.

She felt him bend lower, and found him kneeling by her side. "It's no good offering you my coat," he said, "there's no warmth in it. Besides, it's wet through. But I'm not going to let you die of cold, for all that—just for the sake of an idiotic convention. Frances—sweetheart—I'm going to hold you in my arms."

Fear stabbed her, sharp and agonizing. "Oh, no!" she said, and drew herself back from him. "Not here! Not now!"

Her hand remained locked in his, but he paused.

"Why not here—and now?" he said.

She gasped her quivering answer. "Because—because—I am not sure if I have done right in—in letting you make love to me. I have not been sure—all day."

"You don't love me?" he questioned.

"I don't know," she said. "I can't—possibly—know yet."

"But you knew yesterday," he said.

"Ah, yesterday!" The words came almost with a cry. "I was mad yesterday," she said.

"Why mad?" he reasoned. "My dear, listen to me. Here we are—far away from everywhere—miles away from civilized society. What does it matter—what can it matter—if we throw aside these idiotic conventions just for one night? You know in your heart that it doesn't matter one jot."

"It does matter," she gasped back, painfully, still striving vainly to free the hand he held so closely. "It does matter."

"That means you don't trust me," he said.

"I would if I could," she made desperate answer. "But—but——"

"But——" he echoed, grimly, and let her go.

She heard him get up from his knees, and breathed a sigh of thankfulness.

A moment later there came the rasp of a match and a sudden glare in the darkness. Her eyes turned instinctively, though dazzled, to the light. She saw his face, and again instinctively she shrank. For in the eyes that sought her own there burned a fire that seemed to consume her.

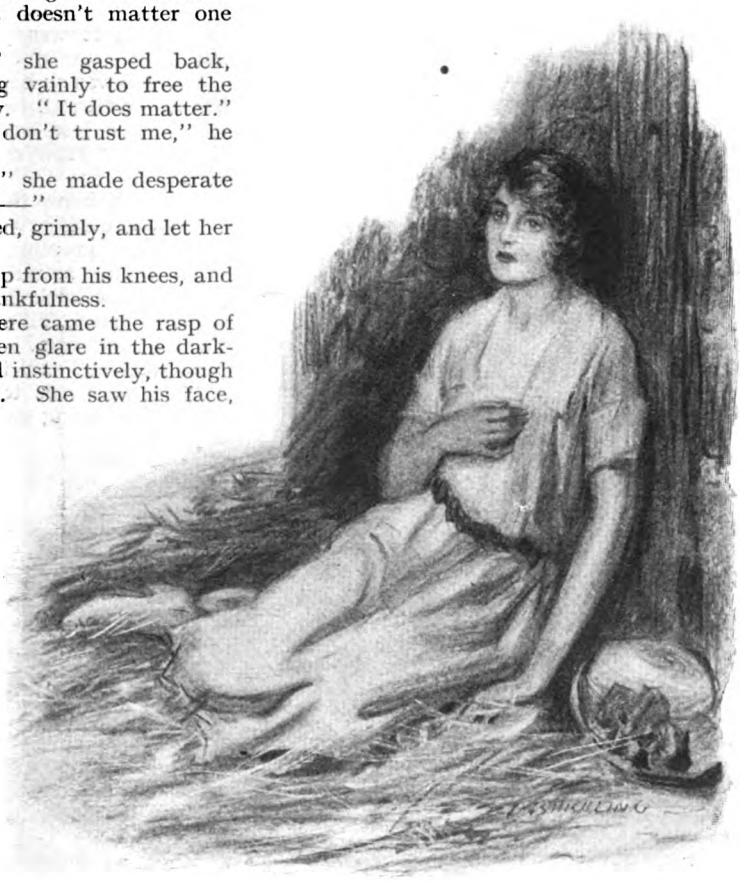
He was lighting a cigarette. He looked at her above it, and his look held a question she dared not answer. Again a terrible shivering caught her. The light went out, and she covered her face.

The man spoke no further word. He smoked his cigarette in the darkness till presently it was finished, and then he threw down the glowing end and ground it under his heel.

The silence between them, like the darkness, was such as could be felt. Only the drip, drip of the rain sounded—oddly metallic, like the tolling of a distant bell.

Frances sat huddled against the wall, not moving, not able to move. Her heart was beating with dull, irregular strokes, and her fear had died down. Perhaps she was too exhausted to be actively afraid. A sense of unreality had descended upon her. She had the feeling of one in a dream. Though from time to time violent shivers caught her, yet she was scarcely aware of them. Only now and then the cold seemed to pierce her like a knife that reached her very soul.

And when that happened she always found herself repeating in broken phrases the prayer which no conscious effort brought to her lips. "From all evil and mischief—from sin—from the crafts—and assaults—of the devil——" Sometimes she thought it was the Bishop reciting the words, but she always realized in the end that she was



There came a sudden glare in the darkness—he was lighting a cigarette. She saw his face and instinctively she shrank.

saying them herself, and wondered—and wondered—why she said them.

Her impressions grew blurred at last. She must have dozed, for suddenly—as one returning from a long distance—she started to the sound of her name, and realized Montague once more—Montague whom she had forgotten.

With a great start she awoke to find herself in his arms. She made an instinctive effort to free herself, but he held her to his breast, and she was too numbed to resist.

"I can't stand it," he said. "I can't stand by and let you die. Frances, you are mine. Do you hear? You are mine. Whatever comes of it; I'm not going to let you go again!"

She heard the rising passion in his voice. It was like a goad, pricking her to action. For a few seconds she lay passive, waiting as it were for strength. All her life she was to remember the strange calm of those waiting moments. She was as one shipwrecked and in appalling danger, yet in some fashion aware of rescue drawing near.

And then quite suddenly deliverance came; she knew not how nor stayed to question whence. She realized only the presence of a power beyond her own, uplifting her, succouring her. She put away the arms that sought to hold her, and, even as she did so, there came a sound beyond the dripping of the rain—the sound of a child's voice singing a little tuneless song to itself out in the darkness.

Frances gasped and uttered a cry. "Is that you, child? Is that you?"

The song ceased. A child's voice made reply. "Is that the pretty lady who gives me flowers?"

They could not see her, but she was close to them. She had entered the shed and stood before them.

"I dreamt I would find you here," she said. "It was Daniel in the lions' den at first, then it was you. Why are you in here?"

Frances was on her feet. The man behind her never stirred.

"I have lost my way, little darling," she said. "How did you get here in the dark?"

"I don't know the dark," said the child. "What is dark?"

Frances, groping, touched and held a small figure standing before her. "Can you take me back, Rosebud?" she said.

A tiny hand, full of confidence, found and clasped her own. "I will take you to Tetherstones," said the child.

They went out together, hand in hand, into the dripping darkness.

PART II.

CHAPTER I.

THE STRANGERS.

HOW long she wandered with the child, stumbling through the darkness, Frances never knew. All that she realized, and that with a deep thankfulness, was that her guide was quite sure of the way.

They spoke little during the journey, but at last there shone a glare of light in the darkness, and Frances roused herself to speech.

"What is that light?"

"That is Tetherstones," said the child. "That is home."

Ah, home! Somehow the words brought the hot tears to Frances' eyes. She was weak with the long struggle, with the mingled fear and pain and exhaustion of the day. She longed—very desperately she longed—for some safe shelter where she could sink down, and this child spoke to her of home. She could not check her tears.

"Never mind!" said the voice at her side. "Don't cry! We are just there. Here is the gate!"

Frances fumbled at it, but the child opened it. They went through together and trod the smooth stones that led to the house.

The door opened before her. "Come in!" said the child. "We'll find Granny."

They entered, and it seemed to Frances that the light was so intense that she could not bear it. She uttered a gasping sound and fell against the wall. There seemed to be a great many people in front of her, a confusion of voices, and out of the indistinguishable medley she heard a man utter a terrible oath. Then there came a crash, whether within the room or within her brain she knew not. She only knew that she fell, and, falling, was caught by strong arms that held her up, that lifted her, that sustained her, in all the dreadful tumult in which her senses swam. She turned as one drowning, and clung to that staunch support.

"Bring her to the fire, poor thing!" said a woman's voice, soft with pity. "Mind how you lift her, Arthur! That's right, Oliver. You lend a hand!"

Helpless in every limb, she felt herself borne forward, and was aware of a great glow from an open fire. They laid her down before it, and she knew that she was safe.

But still, as one who fears to drown, she clung to one of those strong arms that had lifted her.

"Look at that!" said another voice, compassionately. "Just like a frightened child! Where did you find her, Ruthie?"

"Up in the old shed near the Stones," said the child. "I expect she was frightened too. She was lost."

"Let's give her some hot milk!" said the motherly voice that had first spoken. "Move a bit, Arthur! I can't get near her."

"I can't move." It was another voice speaking—a man's voice, short, decided. "Give me the cup! I'll see what I can do."

And then Frances felt the rim of a cup against her lips.

She drank—at first submissively, then hungrily. Her free hand came up to support the cup, and her eyes opened. She looked into a man's eyes—the hard, steady eyes of Roger's master.

"Oh!" she said, weakly. "It is you!"

"There now! She knows you, does she?" It was not Roger's master who spoke, but another man beyond her range of vision. "That's funny, eh, Arthur? You who never look at——"

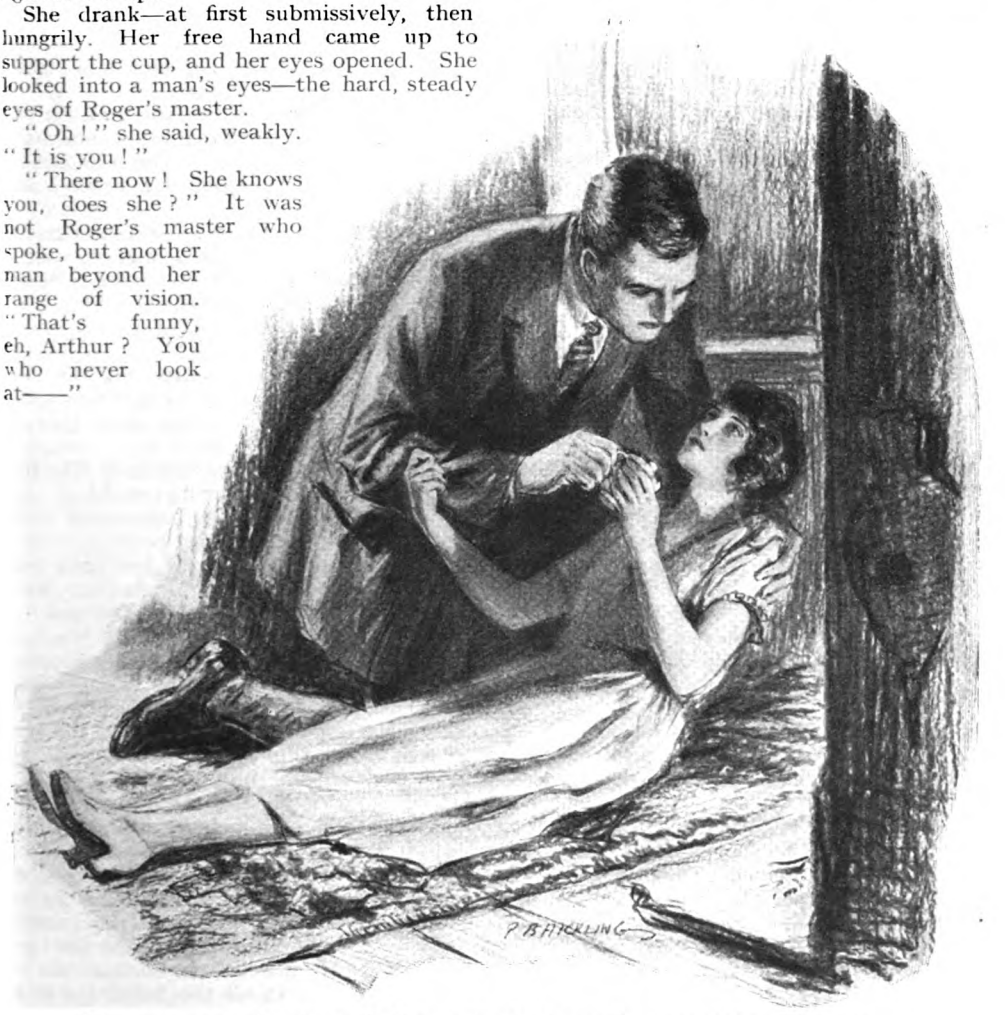
"Shut up!" said Roger's master, briefly and rather brutally. "Get out of it, Oliver! Look after the old man!"

He held the cup again to Frances' lips, and she drank until she drained it. Her eyes remained wide open, fixed upon those other eyes, black-browed and dominant, that had surveyed her so insolently that morning.

A quivering sigh went through her. "I shouldn't have come here," she said.

He handed the cup with an imperious gesture to someone she could not see. "You're quite safe, anyhow," he said. "There's nothing to frighten you."

His voice was deep and very resolute. It had the stern ring of a man accustomed to hard fighting in the arena of life. She



Her eyes opened—she looked into the hard, steady eyes of Roger's master. "Oh!" she said, weakly. "It is you!"

wondered a little even in that moment of doubt and uncertainty. Somehow he did not seem to fit his surroundings. He made her think of a gladiator of ancient Rome rather than a farmer in the depths of peaceful Devon.

"I shouldn't—have come," she said again, speaking with difficulty. "I am sorry."

But still her fingers clung to the rough cloth of his coat like the numbed fingers of one who fears to drown.

"There's nothing for you to be sorry for," he said. "You're welcome to shelter here as long as you will." He spoke abruptly over his shoulder. "Speak to her, Mother! She's scared out of her life."

"Poor child!" said the woman's voice. "And no wonder—out there alone in the fog! Who is she, I wonder? Perhaps she will tell us presently."

The voice was refined. It had a kindly ring, but it sounded tired—too tired for any very poignant feeling. Yet it comforted Frances. It was a homely voice. With a great effort she braced herself for coherent speech.

"I am so sorry," she said, "to intrude on you like this. I am a visitor here—lodging with Mrs. Trehearn at Brookside. My name is Frances Thorold."

She heard the child's voice in the background. "Aunt Maggie, you know the lady. She paints pictures, and she watched you milk the cows. Don't you remember?"

"Why, yes, of course!" The fresh tones of the rough-haired girl took up the tale. "Of course I remember! We'll have to get her undressed and to bed, Mother. She'll die of cold in those wet things."

They came about her in a crowd, as it seemed to Frances' confused senses, but Roger's master kept them back.

"Wait!" he said. "Get a bed ready first! Get hot blankets and brandy! She's chilled to the bone. Make up the fire, Milly! You, Dolly, light a fire upstairs! Elsie, get the warming-pan! Lucy and Nell, go and draw some water!"

He issued his orders with a parade-like brevity that took instantaneous effect. The crowd melted magically. And still Frances clung to that solid supporting arm as if she could never bear to let go.

Suddenly, it seemed to her that she was alone with him. He bent over her and spoke.

"Tell me! What has frightened you so on the moor?"

His look compelled an answer. Even against her will she would have made it, but a violent shivering fit took her and speech became impossible. He grasped an arm of the old settle on which she was now resting and dragged it nearer to the fire.

"Don't be afraid!" he said. "You're safe enough here. Ruth!"

He raised his voice slightly. The child came and stood beside him—a small child, beautifully made, her sweet face upturned like the face of a flower that seeks the sun. Her eyes were always closed, sealed buds that no sun would ever open.

The man did not look at her. He was closely watching Frances.

"Why did you go to the Stones tonight?" he said.

"I had a dream," said the child.

"Go on! What did you dream?" The words were peremptory, but the voice was gentle. Even in that moment Frances noted the difference of tone.

THERE was a momentary pause, then the child spoke, her face uplifted like the face of a dreamer.

"I dreamt first about Daniel in the lions' den, and then it turned into someone up by the Stones—someone who was lost and frightened—and praying for help. So I went to see."

"Weren't you afraid?" the man said.

"I? Oh, no! There was nothing to frighten me. I knew the way. Besides, God was there," the child said, simply. "It was quite safe. Is the lady better now?"

"She is getting better." The man reached out and grasped the slender shoulder nearest to him. "Come and hold her hand," he said.

"May I? Won't she mind?" The small fingers clasped Frances' trembling ones. "You are not lost now," she said, softly. "You are found."

Somehow Frances found her hold transferred. The man rose from his knees. The child nestled down by her side. A sense of peace stole upon her. She knew that she was safe. She closed her eyes to the glare of the fire and lay still.

What happened to her afterwards she never clearly recalled. She was in the hands of strangers who yet in some inexplicable way were friends. She was ill, terribly ill. There came a time when sleep no longer held her, and pain took possession—dreadful intervals when breathing was agony and rest a thing impossible. It stretched out into days of suffering when her very soul seemed to be lacerated with the anguish that racked her body, days when she lay in the cruel grip of a torture such as she had never imagined in all the hardships of her life. Sometimes during those days it seemed to her that death was very near.

They were very constantly about her.

these strangers. She came to know them by name, though she hardly ever spoke to them except to whisper a word of thanks for some service rendered. They would not let her speak from the very outset. They always hushed her into silence whenever she attempted it. And—since speech was very difficult—she came at last to acquiesce dumbly in all that they did.

As the pain lessened and the weakness increased, she grew to lean upon them more and more. One of the girls was always with her, springing up at her slightest movement to help her.

There was someone on the farm, she learned from the girls' talk, for whom everyone had the profoundest contempt. Lucy and Nell always spoke of him as "the Beast." But who the Beast was and why he was always thus described did not transpire.

There was also Arthur, Roger's master, who, she gathered, knew how to assert his authority even over the sometimes mutinous Nell, and commanded her unbounded respect in consequence.

Then there was Oliver—"Oliver Twist" they called him. He was evidently a humorous person, and his comic sayings often caused fits of suppressed giggles behind Frances' screen. Frances used to strain her ears to catch the joke, but it always eluded her, the point smothered in laughter, after which Nell would come round to her, looking contrite, and beg her to try and get a little sleep, in the same breath dismissing Lucy brusquely from the room. Yes, Frances liked Nell. She was so delightfully and naively human.

But most of all she loved little Ruth of the blind eyes, and Ruth's Granny—the patient, tired woman with the mother's voice who had pitied her on that first evening. They were curiously alike, these two, in their patience, their gentleness, their serenity. They always came to her together, and they brought an atmosphere of peace into her room—a sense of rest that none of the sisters possessed.

CHAPTER II.

ROGER'S MASTER.

THE doctor—whose name was Silas Square—was a bluff old countryman, immensely big and powerful, gruff and short of speech, but with a heart as soft as a woman's. His remedies were old-fashioned and drastic, but he always in some fashion conveyed a sense of confidence to his patient. She generally managed to smile at him when he came.

"You've got some pluck," he said to her once, when he had watched the application of a poultice that caused her acute pain.

And she smiled at him again bravely, though she could not speak in answer, so tightly was her endurance stretched.

And then one day he looked at her with eyes that fairly beamed their congratulation. "You've done it!" he said. "You're through the worst, and, madam, you're the bravest woman it has ever been my lot to attend!"

She valued these words immensely. They were so spontaneous, and he was very obviously not a man given to flattery.

His kindly concern for her welfare never failed, even when he had finally drawn her back from the abyss into safety.

But he would not hear of her being moved. "You've had a very stiff time," he said. "And you've got to rest. You're in excellent hands. The Dermots all love having you. So why worry?"

"Because they don't know me. Because I am a stranger," she made answer at last, when her strength had returned sufficiently for her to feel the difficulties of her position. "I can make no return to them for their kindness. I have got to make my living. I have no money."

"Is kindness ever repaid by money?" he said, with a smile in his shrewd eyes. "You can't go yet. I won't sanction it. That heart of yours has got to tick better than it does at present—a long way better—before you think of earning your living again."

"Then I must go to a hospital," said Frances, desperately. "I can't go on in this way. I really can't."

"You'll do as you're told," said old Dr. Square, with a frown. "And you'll take cream—plenty of it—every day."

Then he went away, and Frances was left to fume in solitude.

IN the morning she felt better, and welcomed Ruth when she came in for her usual talk.

"I am going to the Stones to-day," she said. "I wish you could come."

"The Stones!" Memory pierced Frances, and she shrank a little involuntarily. But: "Tell me about the Stones!" she said.

"I go and play there," said Ruth. "Some people are afraid of them. I don't know why. The fairies play their pipes there, and I lie and listen. And sometimes, when they think I am asleep, the biggest Stones talk. But I don't know what they say," she added, quaintly. "It isn't our language at all. I dare say the fairies would understand, but they always run away and hide when the Stones begin."

"What are the Stones?" said Frances.

"Oh, just stones, the same as God made when He made the earth. They stand in a big circle. I don't know why He put them like that, but they have been so ever since the world began. I expect He had a reason," said the child. "Don't you?"

"Yes, dear," said Frances, gently. "And you like to go there?"

"Yes," said Ruth. She hesitated a moment, as one to whom a subject is sacred; then: "My mother went to heaven from there," she said. "So, of course, God must come there sometimes. I hope He'll come there some day when I'm there."

"Wouldn't you be afraid?" said Frances.

"Afraid of God? Oh, no! Why should anyone be afraid of God? He loves us," said the child.

Frances kissed the upturned face that could not see the sun. "Bless you, little darling!" she said. "Is there anyone who wouldn't love you, I wonder?"

Ruth left her soon after, and Nurse Dolly came in, brisk and efficient, to prepare her for the day.

"I am glad to see you better," she said. "But you mustn't sit up yet—not till you have had three days without a temperature. The doctor says so."

"I will be very good," Frances promised. "But do you think I might have my bed pushed near the window? I should so love to look out."

Dolly considered the request judicially for a moment or two. She was recognized commander-in-chief in the sick-room. "We'll see about it," she said. "But it's a heavy bed to move, and has no castors. Still—we'll see."

She smiled upon Frances, and proceeded with her toilet with her usual ready deftness.

Then she departed, and Frances heard her cheery voice calling for Oliver.

Through the window she heard a man's voice reply: "Oliver's gone to put the pigs in the cart for market. What do you want him for?"

"Oh, it's all right; you'll do," said Dolly, still brisk and cheery. "Just come along and help me to move Miss Thorold's bed! She has a fancy for lying in the sunshine."

There was no answer to that save a grunt, and a moment later the sound of a pipe being tapped against the side of the step. Frances felt a quick flush rising in her face. She wished with all her heart that she could have restrained Dolly's well-meaning arrangement as she heard the sound of a man's tread upon the stairs.

"You've done it!" he said. "You're the bravest woman it has

Dolly re-entered, looking well pleased with

herself. "Here's Arthur come to move you," she said. "He's strong enough."

Arthur entered behind her. His great frame with its broad shoulders filled the narrow doorway. He looked straight at her, and she thought his look was oddly lowering, even challenging.

"Come in!" said Dolly.

Frances said nothing. She was tongue-tied.

He came forward into the room, moving with the careless strength of conscious power. He paused at her bedside.

"Are you feeling better?"

She recovered herself with an effort. "I am much better, thank you," she said, and held out her hand.

He paused an instant, as if she had taken him by surprise. Then abruptly he gripped and held the outstretched hand. His face changed magically. He smiled at her, and his smile was good to see. It took years

through the worst, and, madam, you're ever been my lot to attend!"

from his appearance, belying the iron-grey of hair that had once been as black as his brows.

"I'm glad of that," he said. "I hope they are doing all they can for you."

"They are doing far too much," Frances said. "I feel so ashamed lying here."

"Why ashamed?" he said.

She coloured again, painfully, under his eyes. "I have never been in anyone's debt before," she said. "And this—this is more than I can ever hope to repay."

His smile passed, and again his face was hard with the hardness of the fighter. "There is no debt that I can see," he said. "We are all at the mercy of circumstance. If it comes to that, we owed it to ourselves to do what we could for you."

It was brusquely spoken, but his look, grim though it was, seemed to her to hold a hint of friendliness. The dog Roger, who had entered behind him, came nosing up to the bedside, and she slipped her hand free to fondle him. There was something in this man's personality that embarrassed her, wherefore she could not have said.

Roger acknowledged her attention with humble effusion, glancing apologetically towards his master the while.

"You are very kind to put it like that," she said at last, as he stood immovably beside her. "But I can't bear to be a burden upon anyone—especially—especially——"

"Especially what?" he said.

She answered with difficulty. "Especially people who have to work as hard as you do."

"People in our walk of life, do you mean?" he said, and she heard the echo of a sneer behind the words.

"Arthur, you are not to make her talk," said Dolly, severely. "She had a temperature yesterday all through over-excitement and fretting, and it throws her back at once. Will you please move the bed and go?"

She spoke with her habitual decision, and Frances was aware of a strong resemblance between the brother and sister as Arthur turned to comply. She herself was near to tears, such was her weakness and distress of mind, and while her bed was being moved across to the window she could not look at either of them. But when the move was at length satisfactorily effected and she could gaze forth over the dewy sunlit fields, she commanded herself sufficiently to utter a low word of thanks.

He came back to her then and stood beside her. "You are most welcome at Tetherstones," he said. "Please don't talk of debts and burdens! They don't come into the reckoning here."

His tone was restrained, but it held an unmistakable note of apology. She lifted her eyes in amazement, but he had already turned away. He went out of the room with the free, deliberate swing with which he had entered, and she heard him descending the stairs with Roger pattering behind.

"For goodness' sake, never take any notice of Arthur!" said sensible Dolly, as she whisked about the room setting it in order. "He always was a bear, and the circumstances he talks about haven't been such as to have a very taming effect on him."

Then she knew that by some means Dolly had obtained that semi-apology in order to keep her patient's temperature normal.

CHAPTER III.

THE BEAST.

FROM the day that her bed was moved to the window, Frances began to regain her strength.

It came back to her slowly, with intervals of pain and weariness, when she felt as if she were making no progress at all; but it returned, and her indefatigable nurses gradually relinquished their vigil.

"You can go downstairs and sit in the sun if you want to," said Dr. Square one morning.

And she thanked him and promised to make the effort. There was a corner of the old-fashioned garden that she could see from her window in which she had often longed to sit, but now that the time had come, all desire for change had left her. She lacked the energy for enthusiasm.

"That's because you are weak still," said Dolly. "Never mind! I'll arrange everything. We'll get the couch out of the parlour. I can make it very comfortable with some pillows and a rug. It's nice and cool under the cedar. Don't you fret now! Just leave it all to me."

She went off briskly to make her arrangements, and Frances heard her from the garden calling Maggie to come and help her with the couch.

Maggie came, the hair as usual flying wildly all around her sunny face. She was accompanied by the young man they called Oliver, who carried a stable-fork and had evidently just come from the farmyard. Maggie was looking unusually serious, Frances discovered, as the three of them paused at a corner of the old house for discussion.

Presently Maggie's clear tones reached her. "Don't you be a silly girl, Dolly! You've no right to risk it. You keep her where she is!"

Dolly for once seemed undecided, and

She gave an envelope into Frances' hand, but Frances only stared at her blankly. "Well?" said Dolly, after a moment. "Don't you want to read it?"

Oliver, with a faintly rueful smile on his comical countenance, ranged himself on Maggie's side.

"Don't let's have a shindy, for goodness' sake!" he said. "We've kept him quiet till now, but I won't answer for him much longer. The beast has got to break out some time. I told Arthur so this morning."

"Oh, but this is nonsense!" declared Dolly. "You can keep him in the farmyard, surely. I know I could."

"Well, you'd better go and do it, then, that's all," said Maggie. "For he's on the ramp this morning, and no mistake. I can't pacify him."

There followed some words in a lower tone which did not reach Frances at her window, and then the group dispersed, Maggie and Oliver departing in the direction of the farmyard, and Dolly entering the house.

Frances was left alone for some time, and presently, coming to the not unwelcome conclusion that she was to remain in her room that day, she began to fall asleep. The day was sultry and very still. The breeze, laden with the scent of heather, came in upon her like a benediction, playing lightly with her hair, closing her weary lids. She sank more and more deeply into repose.

Then, just when the spell seemed complete, there came a sudden and violent interruption, so startling that she sprang up in a wild alarm, not knowing whence it came.

It began like the bellow of a bull—a terrific sound that sent all the blood to her heart; then she realized that it came from somewhere in the house, not the farmyard, and sat there palpitating, asking herself what it could be.

It went on for many seconds. Sometimes it seemed to her strained senses like the shouting of an angry man, then its utter lack of articulation and intelligibility convinced her that it must be some animal gone mad and broken loose. In the midst of the din she thought she heard a woman's voice crying frantically for help, and then there came a frightful crash, and all sound ceased.

Frances sank back upon her pillows, completely unnerved. Something terrible had happened. Of that she was certain. But what? But what? Why was the house so deadly quiet after the uproar—that tumult that had made her think of devils fighting together? This mysterious beast of whom the two girls whispered so freely—was it he who had broken loose, trampling wide destruction through that wonderland of peace? And had he escaped after that final crash, or was he dead? She longed to know, yet dreaded to find out.

Her limbs felt paralysed, and her heart was beating with slow, uneven strokes. A catastrophe of some kind had taken place. Of that she felt certain. Had one of the six sisters been hurt? That wild cry for help—she was sure now that she had heard it—which girl was it who had been in such sore distress? And had the help come in time?

AH! A sound at last! A step upon the stair! The door opened with quiet decision and Dolly entered. She looked exactly as usual, her face perfectly calm and unclouded.

"I am sorry," she said, "but I am afraid it is a little too cold for you in the garden to-day. The wind has changed."

Frances gave a gasp, between relief and incredulity. For the moment words were beyond her.

"Is there anything the matter?" said Dolly.

With an effort Frances made reply. "I thought—something had happened—such a strange noise—it woke me."

Dolly looked at her with a kindly smile. "Ah, you've been dreaming," she said, practically. "People often get nightmares after a bad illness. It's just weakness, you know."

She came and felt Frances' pulse. "Yes, I think you are well enough. I have got a letter for you here. Mrs. Trehearn sent it up this morning."

She gave an envelope into Frances' hand, but Frances only stared at her blankly.

"Well?" said Dolly, after a moment. "Don't you want to read it?"

"Thank you," Frances said, recovering herself.

Dolly smiled again upon her and went to the door. "One of the girls will be in with your cocoa directly. I must go down and help mother with the bread."

She went, still unruffled, serenely sure of herself. But Frances, who at first had been almost bewildered into imagining that she had actually dreamed the disturbance below, lay back again with a feeling akin to indignation. Did Dolly really think that she was to be deceived so easily?

She suddenly remembered the letter in her hand, and looked down at it. A man's writing sprawled across the envelope, and again her heart gave a jerk. What was this?

No word from Montague Rotherby had reached her since little Ruth had led her to Tetherstones on that night of darkness. She had been too ill to think of him till lately, and now in her convalescence she never voluntarily suffered her thoughts to wander in his direction. She had come to regard the whole episode of her acquaintance

with him in the light of a curious illusion, such an illusion as she would always remember with a sense of shame. With all her heart she hoped that she would never see him again, for the bare memory of him had become abhorrent to her. Here in the wholesome security of Tetherstones she felt that she had come to her senses, and she would never again be led away by the glitter of that which was not gold.

And so, as she looked at the letter in her hand, there came upon her such a feeling of revolt as had never before possessed her. It was as though she grasped a serpent, and she yearned to destroy it, but dared not.

There came again to her as a sombre echo in her soul the memory of the Bishop's words: ". . . until you have endured your hell and—if God is merciful—begun to work out your own salvation."

But had she yet endured her hell? Of the hours spent with Rotherby on the moor before the coming of the child her memory was vague. A long wandering, coupled with a growing fear, and at the last an overwhelming sense of evil that she was powerless to combat, were the only impressions that remained to her. But with a great vividness did she remember how she had surrendered herself to him the evening before, and burned with shame at the memory. No, she never wanted to see him again, and she longed to destroy his letter unread. The very touch of it was horrible to her.

But something stayed her hand. Something called within her—a mocking, elusive something that taunted her courage. What was there in a letter to frighten her? If she were sure of herself—if she were sure of herself! She tore open the envelope with a gesture of exasperation. Of course she was sure of herself!

"CIRCE, my beloved!" So the note began, and before her eyes there swam a mist. No man in the whole world had ever called her beloved before! She gripped herself firmly, nerving herself for the ordeal. This was not Love—this was not Love! This was an evil that must be firmly met and cast out. But ah, if it had been Love!

Resolutely she read the letter through. It was written from the inn at Fordestown. "I lost you on that night of fog, but I have found you again, and I have been waiting ever since. They tell me you are better, but I can't meet you among strangers. When will you come to me? Come soon, Circe beloved! Come soon!—I am yours, M. R."

She looked up from the letter. So he was waiting for her still! Somehow she had thought that he would not have deemed it worth his while. A curious dazed feeling possessed her. He was waiting for her still! The ordeal was not over yet. How was she going to face it?

There came a knock at the door—Nell's boyish knock. She entered, carrying a tray with cocoa and cream upon it.

"I'm sorry I'm late," she said. "I hope you haven't been wanting it very badly."

Frances crumpled the letter in her hand. She looked at the girl and saw that Nell's usually rosy face was pale.

"Is anything the matter, Nell?" she said.

Nell's chin quivered at the question. "Oh, there's been a frightful row," she said. "But I mustn't tell you anything about it. Arthur would be furious if he knew."

"You needn't be afraid of that," said Frances. "He won't know."

"Thank you," the girl said, and dried her eyes. "But I can't tell you, all the same. It wouldn't be fair. You don't know the beast's ways, and it's a good thing you don't. Please don't ask me anything—or I shall say too much! I know I shall."

"My dear, I don't want you to tell me anything against your will," Frances said, kindly.

"No, it isn't that," Nell said. "But I don't want you to think you ought to go. We've been so glad to have you. We've loved looking after you. But there's never any peace—and never will be so long as Arthur——" She broke off abruptly. "Oh, I'd better go. I'm making a muddle of things, and there'll be a worse row if he finds out."

She left the room precipitately, and Frances was again alone. She closed her eyes to think. Something in Nell's confused words had given her a shock.

So they wanted her gone! That was what it amounted to. She had outstayed her welcome, and she must go. The thought of all the kindness they had showered upon her sent a pang to her heart. How good they had been to the unwelcome stranger within their gates! And all the while there had been no peace at Tetherstones because of the black-browed master who wanted her gone.

No peace at Tetherstones, and how nobly they had striven to keep it from her! Ah, well, she knew now—she knew now!

Her hand clenched unconsciously, and she became aware of the letter she held. A great wave of feeling went through her. Her eyes were suddenly full of tears. Ah, if it had been Love that called her! If it had been Love!

(To be continued.)

Portraits in Pencil and Pen

BY

WALTER TITTLE

Illustrated with Drawings from Life, made at Sittings Specially Given to the Artist.

AS I read from time to time of famous world figures, I find myself, in common with most people, I fancy, visualizing the ones that appeal most strongly to my imagination. As I gather my verbal or pictorial information from the printed page, I imagine my characters as living and moving about, occupied with the tasks with which the world associates them, or pursuing their favourite hobbies and forms of recreation. I am likely, even, to endow them with a quality of voice that seems to me best fitted to the dream-picture that I have constructed. To some I will give a nervous energy of action, to others a calmer force, and to still others a rigid, stately dignity that, in most instances, I have been relieved to find a misconception. Recently I had an exceptional opportunity to test the accuracy of some of my visualizations by coming face to face with a number of personages of whom I had long known, for the purpose of making portraits of them. Some of the original studies for these portraits are reproduced herewith.

LORD BALFOUR.

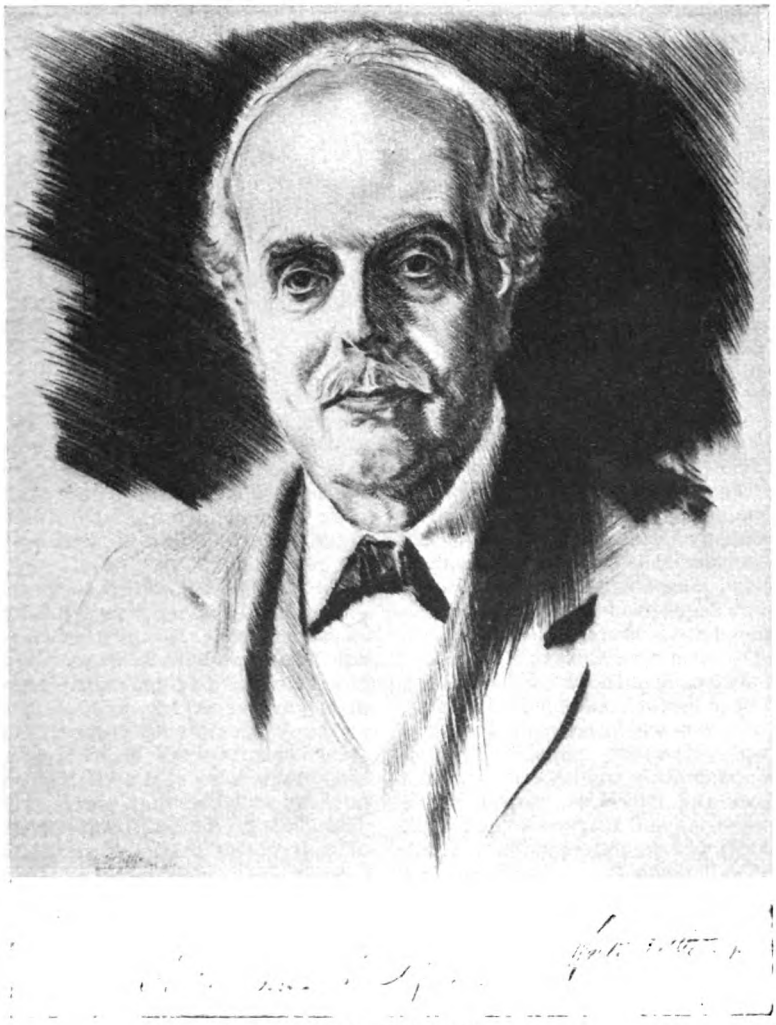
I HAVE read of Lord Balfour since I was a child. To me he has been a great British institution rather than an individual, and so much of my childish awe was still with me as late as the year 1917 that his arrival in America at that time caused in me a feeling of wonder almost as great as if the Tower of London had been purchased and transported by the money-magic of some American millionaire for erection in Central Park. Of course, I was forced to smile at my own naive mental attitude. Why shouldn't Lord Balfour (or Mr. Balfour, as he then was) come to America? But second thought showed that to me he was one of my throng of dream-people, and that what subconsciously surprised me was that he was a real person after all, and not a character from one of the novels of Dickens that I loved so to devour when my first consciousness of Lord Balfour was formed.

Visual proof of this later and more reasonable conception came recently in Washington, when I saw a tall, slightly stooped, active gentleman enter a motor in front of a public building. There, at last, was Lord Balfour. In response to the applause of the assembled crowd he smiled brightly, nodded his head repeatedly, and waved his hand quickly in short arcs, as though he were endeavouring to entertain a very small child. The gesture was distinctly feminine, and probably was the result of his somewhat restricted position in the rear seat of a limousine. He seemed very friendly, and glad of the approval of the throng. His profile to me was rather a surprise, and not exactly what one would expect from the aspect of his full face.

I had another chance to study him, and to make a quick sketch, before our first actual sitting. My chair was the next but one to his on an occasion when he made an address. In gesture and voice and smile he gave a vivid impression of what he must have been like at twenty. I believe I have never seen a man to whom the graces

of youth have clung so becomingly. His mannerisms of posture suggested the well-bred, rather charmingly awkward boy who has recently acquired a very considerable growth and hardly knows how to handle the new acquisition. As he rose, assisting himself by gripping the table at which we sat, his movements, I fancied, were quite the same as when he was called upon to recite his lessons at Eton nearly sixty years ago. His voice was exceedingly pleasant in quality, without the slightest trace of oratorical manner, and, again, the voice of a boy. The quick smile seemed to take fifty years from his age, which asserted itself more when his face was at rest.

Our first sitting occurred in his flat. It was in the evening, after a hard day's work, and his face showed some fatigue. Our second sitting was in the middle of the afternoon, and he looked quite young and rested. I have never enjoyed anyone's conversation more than Lord Balfour's. His choice of words and his pronunciation of them stamped him as the perfect purist. His grasp of all subjects seemed complete. His face was so alive, his manner so cordial, and he seemed so greatly interested in the subjects we discussed. He asked me who my recent sitters had been. I recited my list in the order in which I had done them, the first group being six Frenchmen. "Well, you sound very French, so far," he laughed. "Now I'll be British," I replied, enumerating eight of his countrymen. "Good! That more than balances the



LORD BALFOUR.

account." Our conversation then drifted to art in general, and his knowledge of it was quite broad. He talked of sports, people, even international politics, and was very enthusiastic about the achievements of the Conference. America had a strong appeal for him, and his stay was proving to be most enjoyable. He contrasted New York, London, and Paris. "London is to me the most interesting of places. It is unlike other European cities. It has a peculiar charm of antiquity and tradition. There are a number of cities on the Continent that resemble Paris, but London has an atmosphere that is quite its own. Personally, I have never cared much for Paris, though I recognize its definite appeal. The three cities are so utterly different, and each so wonderful in its own way! New York, with its great buildings, is, of course, the result of environment; lack of space has made it what it is. It appeals to me greatly now and when I was here before. I am sure that it could become quite a passion with me."

We conversed during the entire time that our sittings required, and the rapidly changing expressions of his mobile face would have been a tax on the agility of any artist's hand. He raised his eyebrows a great deal, especially when he smiled. I have rarely seen a face capable of such variety of expression, and choice was difficult when one could see material for many sketches in the course of a few moments. A countenance so richly expressive is the logical result of a life as long and full as Lord Balfour's has been.

SIR H. RIDER HAGGARD.

WHO has not thrilled to those splendid romances, "King Solomon's Mines," "She," and "Allan Quatermain"? Well do I remember, as a boy, the appearance serially of "Montezuma's Daughter," and how hopelessly far away the arrival of the next instalment seemed, though the medium was a daily paper. And the name H. Rider Haggard! The sound of it, dashing, almost sinister. Death on the Pale Horse could suggest little more to me then.

What a different man from the one of these childish dreams I found when I met him recently in London! At a glance one could see that he was easily capable of writing the many novels that have given so much pleasure, but there is little of the dreaming romanticist in his appearance. He is very tall, angular, and huge of frame. His bones are big. He looks like a capable farmer rather than a dreamer, and he is an authority on farming. One can also find in his face the qualities that make the judge, and he has been on the local bench for thirty years. There is much force in his face and in his gestures. His features are quite large on his proportionately small head, and the straight lines and flat hewn planes of the latter are vigorous and marked to a degree. Humour is his, and it, too, is written on his revealing countenance.

Considering the wide diversity of his achievements outside the field of literature one cannot help being astonished that he found time for writing at all, and in view of the fact that a mere list of the titles of his books would almost fill a page of this magazine it is a wonder that he had time for anything else. He began life as a barrister, but when his first successful novels appeared no one seemed to believe that he could be a writer and a barrister too, so his law-practice suffered. Then followed Government service in Natal and South Africa, and later in other parts of the world. He became an authority on Empire migration and on Imperial and social conditions, and was sent on various missions as the special commissioner of his Government. He travelled round the world as a member of the Dominions Royal Commission. Beside knighthood he has had many honours. In Canada a mountain and a glacier have been named after him. And these for activities apart from his writing.

SIR RIDER'S wide experience has provided him with a vast fund of amusing anecdotes. He told me of a very successful portrait that was made of him by Mr. Maurice Greiffenhagen, the illustrator of a number of his books. It was shown at the Academy with great success. In the street one day Sir Rider was approached by a man, who said: "I want to tell you how much I like that portrait of you; I'm Jack." "Jack who?" was the interrogation of the subject of the picture, and received the explanation that the man was Richard Jack, the well-known painter.

On another occasion Sir Rider found himself the table companion of Lord Leighton. Casting about in his mind for a subject of conversation that would be of interest to the famous artist, he asked if Lord Leighton knew the work of Mr. Greiffen-

SIR H. RIDER HAGGARD.

hagen. "Greiffenhagen! Oh, yes; he is the man who says I can't paint!" and here the conversation languished.

I was greatly entertained by Sir Rider's humorous account of the endeavours of people on several occasions to add to his many accomplishments and professions that of the physician. On the day previous to our sitting he had attended a garden-party given by the King at Buckingham Palace. Here he was approached by a titled pair who wished to express their gratitude to him for having been instrumental in saving the life of their son. If I recall rightly the boy was suffering from pneumonia, had reached the crisis, and it was quite vital that he should be made to perspire. They tried many things to secure this end, but without success. The patient was very weak and listless. Nothing interested him until they tried reading to him from one of Sir Rider's books. At once his curiosity was aroused, and when a thrilling climax was reached he broke into a profuse perspiration. From then on his recovery was rapid. The publishers of Sir Rider's books should not overlook this and similar testimonials in preparing their advertisements. His writings should be claimed as a specific for certain ailments.

Our conversation touched upon many interesting things that I should like to record, but I must choose only a few. He told me of his life at Ditchingham, and of his home there, Ditchingham House, where he kindly invited me to visit him. He interpreted for me the Egyptian cartouche that I had observed on his stationery, and told me the story of a famous Aztec ring, long in his possession, found originally in a tomb on the finger of one of several figures seated around a table, the victims apparently of some violent death. The ring is now in the British Museum.

Our discourse, as usual, turned to art, in view of the activity of my pencil. Sir Rider regretted the low artistic average of London's public monuments. He called my attention to the very badly-executed figure of a lion on the plinth of a new and prominently placed memorial. This recalled to me one of many amusing stories for which I am indebted to the English actor, Mr. Frederick Kerr. A well-known London wit was passing this monument with a friend.

"Whose monument is this?" he asked.

"Oh, that is in memory of ——"

"Yes, but who made it?"

"It is by the sculptor X."

"Oh, I thought it was by Euclid."

A. S. M. HUTCHINSON.

A TALL, slender man with an eager, sensitive face, glasses with thick lenses as an assistance to eyes that showed the strain of much use, called upon me at my hotel in London. He seemed shy almost to the verge of timidity, and, as I learned on acquaintance, is possessed of an extreme modesty amounting almost to an inferiority complex. And this in spite of the fact that he has a decided personal charm that is obvious even at the first glance, and mounts with enviable rapidity when he is engaged in conversation. If Mr. A. S. M. Hutchinson reads this I am sure he will gasp with amazement, as he is sincerely convinced that he is unpleasant to look upon, and that "If Winter Comes"

A. S. M. HUTCHINSON.

is a second-rate novel that, by some freakish whim of fortune, sold prodigiously without any explainable reason.

When I admitted to him that I had not yet read this book he implored me in a most whimsical way to avoid it. "Please remain the person who has not," he said, and then, fearing apparently that he had made a boast in referring to me as the *one* who had not read it, was at pains immediately to correct it. I insisted that I should not be sacrificed to his modesty, but still he protested. "Then I will read 'Once Aboard the Lugger.'" "Yes, yes, you can read that, but please not the other!"

I HAD an amusing account from Mr. Algernon Blackwood of a speech Mr Hutchinson made on the occasion of a dinner given in his honour. Among other things he said: "I suppose it is expected of me to say some things about this upstart book of mine that has sold so tremendously. You have all doubtless asked yourselves, 'Why *did* it sell?' but I assure you that you cannot be more mystified than I am. I have evolved a theory, however, that I think must be the real solution of the problem. Do you remember what a frightfully hot summer we had last year? Everyone was nearly prostrated, and the subject of the weather was the one constantly discussed. We gasped and sweltered—and then my book appeared. They saw it on all the bookstalls: "If Winter Comes." Ah! here was a discussion of the one absorbing subject. The incontinent summer had caused them so much suffering, perhaps it would be followed by a winter equally severe. And here was a book, with an almanac perhaps, and forecasts of what was in store, with instructions for avoiding colds, pneumonia, and chilblains, and with panaceas for the same in case one was overtaken by them. So they rushed to buy my book, took it home, and, after a disgusted glance at its contents had revealed their error, tossed it aside unread."

The whimsical self-sacrificing humour that this reveals is typical of the man. Few writers flaunt a chance to be taken seriously, especially when they so richly deserve it. But Mr. Hutchinson's sensitiveness is such that he seems to take refuge from possible criticism by having the first laugh at himself if any is to be had, and refusing absolutely to take himself seriously. He tells me that he avoids reading reviews of his books, and I am quite sure that the recent increase to his fame has brought him great uneasiness, and some misery. I have wondered sometimes if complications of this sort might be overcome by psycho-analysis and the uncomfortable "complexes" removed, but in the case of a creative artist the uprooting might prove disastrous, the peculiarity probably being interwoven with the very qualities that make creation possible.

It surprised me to have this most gifted man envy what powers I possess for pictorial expression. He said he has always been sure that he would prefer it to writing. But in view of what he has given us we are, and he should be, well content with the path that Fate has chosen for him.

D. LLOYD GEORGE.

ASSOCIATION gives to the sound of certain names a flavour of importance. "Rothschild," without such association, would have no more distinction than "Rosenbaum," nor would "Venus" conjure up a mental image of glorious beauty if it were only the name of a pencil. "Stinnes" and "Zaharoff" have recently taken on a thunderous quality in proportion to their new-found importance, and if it were not for his supremacy in the world of art the name of Rembrandt would be robbed largely of its sonorous, shadowy reverberations. The round, flowing Italian tongue endowed Michelangelo Buonarroti with a decidedly musical appellation, but his mighty works were necessary to give the name its energy, as if it were written in leaping flames across the sky. "Wall Street" sounds rich, "London" sombre and foggy, while "Ten, Downing Street" has a sound of mystery and power. "Ten, Oxford Street" has not the same effect. The flavour is at once decidedly different.

As one walks into Downing Street from Whitehall it seems an odd place to deposit the handful of dwellings that are clustered there. They are dwarfed by the Foreign Office, the Admiralty, and the Houses of Parliament, where Big Ben seems to say "Lon-Don" in the most appropriate of solemn tones when the hour is struck. Number ten is the second of the short row of dwellings following the office buildings on the right. Once past the nice old door of this unpretentious house the visitor finds himself in a sizable room, the walls of which are decorated with numerous skulls of

exotic deer and antelopes, unadorned by fur, and presenting an interesting variety of horns and antlers, straight, branched, and in some instances twisted into long spirals. Rather shabby old offices occupy the remainder of the ground floor; red sticks in my mind as a colour that repeats, and the flavour of the whole as decidedly Victorian.

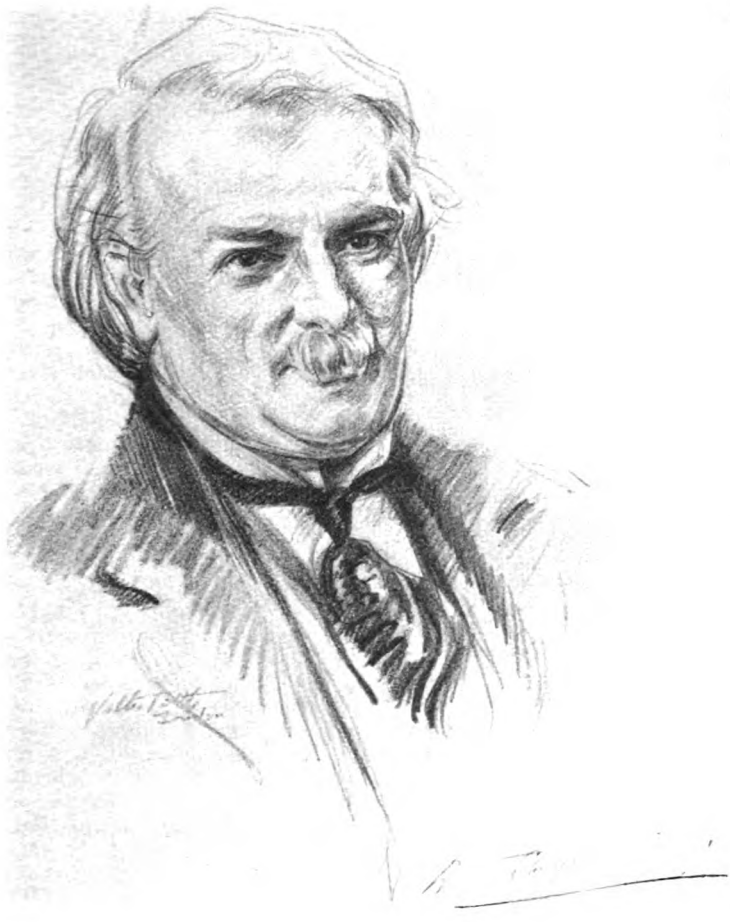
Here I caught my first glimpse of the late, but none the less alive, Premier, Mr. Lloyd George. After the many photographs to which we all are used, the reality seemed so vivid, so full of energy and life. I had an excellent opportunity to observe him a short time afterwards at a luncheon given in his honour. A considerable number of guests were assembled, chatting in groups as they awaited the arrival of the distinguished man. After a little time a loud voice called, "Gentlemen, the Prime Minister." His entrance was pleasingly dramatic, rendered so partially by the vigorous, active way in which he walked to the centre of the room, his face wreathed in smiles, his hand extended in hearty greeting to a number of men in quick succession.

His decidedly short stature contrasted sharply with the average height of the men who surrounded him, but, though the assemblage included many distinguished men, his was easily the dominating personality, even physically, of the aggregation. His head is large and rather square, surmounted by a luxurious mane of lustrous white hair, worn quite full at the back and sides. The forehead is very broad and of generous height, and beneath, his broad dark eyes dance and twinkle with abundant humour. The absence of a smile from his face was the rare exception. Even if his mouth assumed a comparatively solemn expression, his eyes laughed gaily on. His nose is short, vigorous, and of good shape; his mouth astonishingly small. It lies hidden beneath a parenthesis of curved moustaches that partially cover the lower lip. I could not help thinking of his tiny mouth as being like a little country. Britain, for example, that has been forced by its limitations to reach out and create for itself a supporting empire in the great surrounding world. And most fascinating these annexations are; lines, and dimples, and muscular developments all started into harmonious activity at the jovial dictation of the little mouth, causing a pleasant upheaval over the broad empire of the face, extending even into the many happy little dependencies that surround his handsome eyes. The secret of Mr. Lloyd George's success is written here. Ability plus radiating personality have carried him to the heights. I wonder which quality has contributed most to his success? Great strength is his beyond a doubt; in the war he was a tower of strength, but so, too, were the Premiers of some other countries whose places were filled and re-filled years before Mr. Lloyd George laid down the reins of government. Whatever the crisis, his sureness, magnetism, and personality brought confusion to his enemies. His power of inspiring confidence, his ability to reconcile warring factions, and, of the utmost importance, his great gift for presenting his case through the medium of brilliant oratory, have carried him safely through many storms. Of the last-mentioned talent I was afforded an example on this same occasion.

I WAS fortunate in having a seat at a table facing the Prime Minister, and removed from him by only a few feet. The arrangement was made at his direction to afford me an opportunity of studying him before making the accompanying sketch and the dry-point portrait that followed. During the luncheon there was much gay talk and laughter, and many complimentary toasts and speeches, as on this occasion the Premier was in the hands of his friends only. The meal concluded, there was a speech by our host, Sir Murray Hyslop, which ended with the announcement that Mr. Lloyd George would speak.

During the burst of anticipatory applause, he sat with his head bowed, his face covered with his hands. The withdrawing of his hands revealed the most solemn expression that I had seen on his usually merry countenance. He rose to his feet slowly, almost sadly, causing us to expect a grave and portentous utterance, but the little mouth began to twitch at the corners, telegraphing its impulses gradually to the farthermost departments of the facial empire, and the speech began in a most humorous and whimsical vein. His wit was excellent, his humour delightful. He gave us many good laughs. The portent of this introduction was that the existence of a Prime Minister of England is not always a happy one, but his mischievous face seemed to indicate that he was bearing up under the burden exceedingly well. Later on in his address more serious elements crept in, and bursts of the more spectacular kind of oratory, skilfully and convincingly done, but the speaker's humour was never long suppressed.

His oratorical method is in marked contrast to those of the great French exponents of this somewhat abated but important art. MM. Briand and Viviani are the fiery musicians of the spoken word; Mr. Lloyd



D. LLOYD GEORGE.

George differs from them as the Anglo-Saxon temperament differs from the Latin. But he is none the less a brilliant orator for this difference. He swayed his audience at will. His voice is rich and colourful. A trace of Welsh accent gave a quaint flavour to his speech. When he concluded, and the tempestuous applause had subsided, Sir James Greig, who sat at my side, and who had promised me a rare treat before the address began, said: "It was the finest speech I have ever heard him make."

During the recent General Election I enjoyed the experience of living in one of London's greatest political clubs. Here I heard praise and revilement alternately heaped on the head of Mr. Lloyd George. But one phase of the propaganda of the opposing campaign that amused me most was the constantly iterated and reiterated statement that the Prime Minister was too old and exhausted to continue in public life. The mental picture that his enemies conjured up was of an old man, limping and tottering towards his dotage. To these accusations his friends had ample material for refutation, for a more resilient mental and physical personality than Mr. Lloyd George it has rarely been my lot to meet.

In his second article, to be published next month, Mr. Walter Tittle will deal with Sir Oliver Lodge, John Drinkwater, Maurice Hewlett, and W. W. Jacobs.

WILLIAM'S NARROW SQUEAK

BY

STACY AUMONIER

ILLUSTRATED BY ARTHUR WATTS

"CONFOUND that Mrs. Buswell!" Twenty minutes to nine, and she had not either called me or brought my early cup of tea! During the four years in which I had held the distinguished position of sub-manager to the Southrepps Bank in Baker Street—the youngest sub-manager ever appointed in the whole record of this famous Southrepps banking association, sir—it had always been my proud boast that I had never been one minute late in the morning, not one minute. Apart from the eagerness and interest I flatter myself I have always taken in my work, I consider it a valuable example to the junior clerks. I like to be at my desk when they arrive, and to grade the quality of my morning salutation to a precise scale of minutes. Sharp on time and I say breezily: "Good morning, Mr. So-and-so!" Two minutes late: "Good-morning." Four minutes late: "Morning." Five minutes late: a curt nod. Anything between five and eight minutes: a black scowl. Anything beyond eight minutes: a peremptory demand for explanation. Punctuality and precision have always been the most pronounced of my characteristics. To these I probably owe my success in life.

Now, I occupied a pleasant suite of rooms in a small house in Motcombe Street. Mrs. Buswell was my landlady. I did my utmost to inculcate into her the value and importance of these two strong principles, and in a fair way I succeeded. On the whole I could not complain of Mrs. Buswell. She knocked on my door every morning at half-past eight, and set down a cup of tea. I would then rise, drink the tea, shave, have a bath, dress, and enter my sitting-room at ten minutes to nine. My breakfast was invariably ready. Breakfast would occupy fifteen minutes. I would then smoke one cigarette, glance at the newspaper, put on my boots, and leave the house at nine-fifteen. I would walk along a quiet street parallel to the Marylebone Road, and arrive at the bank about three minutes before half-past nine. At half-past nine—I say—I would be seated at my desk, pen in hand. Our manager, Mr. Woodward, did not come till ten.

But recently Mrs. Buswell had developed a regrettable lapse. On Monday she had been three minutes late. On Wednesday, four and a half. On Thursday, so late that I had to go without marmalade, and to take a bus along the Marylebone Road. I would rather go without breakfast altogether than be late at the bank. And now on this Friday morning she was again ten minutes late and there was no sound of her. I rang the bell and waited, but there was no answer. I went out on to the landing and called down: "Mrs. Buswell, are you there?"

I could get no answer to this. The minutes were crowding by. I was angry. I believe I swore. In any case I hastily donned a dressing-gown and slippers and explored the basement. There was no sign of Mrs. Buswell, and the fire was not lighted. Mystery of mysteries! I went back and consulted my watch. Had it gone wrong? Was I several hours fast? But no, I am a

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man peculiarly sensitive to time. I knew by my sensations that it must be somewhere about eight-forty-five. Without more ado I went upstairs and knocked on Mrs. Buswell's bedroom door. Again there was no answer. I knocked louder. A dread suspicion came to me. Perhaps she had died in the night, or been murdered ?

I boldly opened the door. Mrs. Buswell was not there. The bed was sketchily made. I could not tell whether it had been slept in or not. There was no one else in the house. It was all most provoking. She must have gone out somewhere—perhaps to get some bread or milk. Anyway, I could not afford to waste any more time. I went back to my room, shaved in cold water, had a bath, and dressed myself. By that time it was seven minutes past nine. Still no sign of Mrs. Buswell. I went down into the kitchen. I just had time to make myself a cup of tea, and then, by taking the Marylebone Road bus, I could be at the bank at my usual time. I filled the kettle, and struck a match to light the gas-stove. And then I had my second shock. The gas was cut off.

" Now, that's a queer, mysterious thing ! " I thought. I had a cheerless breakfast of bread and butter and cold water. I would *not* be late at the bank. I was just preparing to go when I realized that my boots were not cleaned, and yesterday had been muddy. I then really did swear at the defaulting landlady. To turn up at the bank with yesterday's mud on one's boots is an even more heinous offence than being five minutes late. I fetched my boots and cleaned them.

In the end I had to run to the corner where the buses passed. Of course, there was not one in sight ! I waited several minutes, fuming with impatience. No bus came, neither was there anyone about.

" What's the matter with the world ? " I exclaimed, angrily. I crossed the road and ran down the side street that led to Baker Street. I ran nearly all the way. I did not pass a soul, but so consumed was I with my special complexity I hardly noted the fact. It is in any case a source of pride to me to be able to state that when I entered the bank it was just one minute to the half-hour. I was at my desk by half-past, pen in hand. We had at that time only two junior clerks, Weaks and Burton. (Burton, indeed, was really only an office boy.) Of course, they were both late. Burton had been late on several occasions recently and I was in a bad temper. I had had practically no breakfast in order to be in time, and I prepared myself to put Master Burton in his place. Five-and-twenty minutes to ten and neither had arrived. Twenty to, and a deadly stillness pervaded the bank premises.

I became eerily conscious of a silence that I had never felt in my life before. There was no sound of traffic outside at all !

" Perhaps there's been a strike," I thought. " And then, of course, Weaks and Burton would both be unavoidably late."

But I didn't like it at all. I went out to the front door and looked up and down Baker Street. There were no vehicles at all, no people, no life of any sort !

An almost unrealizable horror gripped me. I looked up at windows, peered into basements, and shouted at the top of my voice. There was no answer, no response. The position was too staggering to be grasped. Horrors, visions, black misgivings crept through me. Prophetic utterances, and Biblical quotations.

" And one shall be taken and the other left ! "

Had everyone been taken ? and I the only other left ? I am not an hysterical man. I have always been sensible, orthodox, and practical. I am a member of the Church of England, and an upholder of the Throne and the Unionist party. I said to myself, firmly :—

" William, get a grip on yourself ! "

I WENT back to my desk and waited. Perhaps Mr. Woodward would turn up at ten. He was seldom late. It would be in any case an immense relief to discuss the amazing phenomenon with someone. Ten o'clock came, a quarter past, no Mr. Woodward. Then, indeed, I did become slightly unbalanced. I had a sudden inspiration. The telephone ! I rushed to the instrument, lifted the receiver, and screamed into it : " Hullo ! Hullo ! Hullo ! Is anyone there ? "

There was a pause, and then I distinctly heard a voice say, weakly :—

" Hullo, who is that ? "

" It's I, William Mears, of the Southrepps Bank. Who are you, for God's sake ? "

I listened. There was no sound but the drone of the wires. I waited, and called again and again. The low hum of the wires continued. Then I thought to myself : " Nevertheless, the telephone is working. If it is working, someone must be at the power-station."

Where were the power-stations ? I had distinctly heard that voice at the other end —a man's.

I sat calmly at my desk, almost afraid to think. Eleven o'clock came, eleven-fifteen, eleven-thirty. I hope you will place it to my credit that between eleven-thirty and twelve I quietly continued my office routine as though nothing were the matter. We were within a week of our quarterly balances,

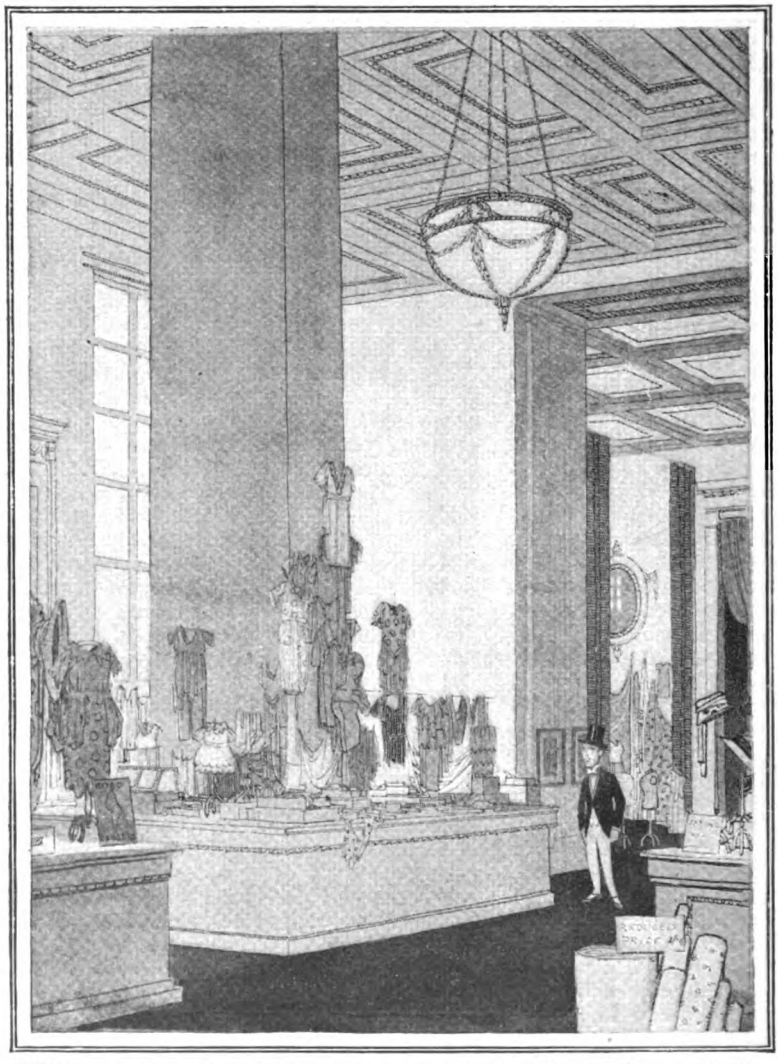
and there was much to do—especially with all the staff away.

Just before twelve, however, I thought to myself :—

" What's the good of banking when there is no one to bank ? "

I shut the ledger, put on my hat, and went out, after carefully locking everything up. The sun was shining, and the roads, wet from yesterday's downpour, gaily reflected the blue and white sky. In that strange hour it gave me a curious sense of comfort to observe light cirrus clouds moving across the sky. Yes, something was alive then.

I walked up Baker Street. The doors of some of the shops were open, and I went in. There were neither shopkeepers nor customers. I could have helped myself to things of untold value. At the corner of Orchard Street was a newspaper placard. It said : " Latest from Newmarket." There was no date on the paper. It seemed grimly ironic to think of horse-racing when Oxford Street was entirely deserted. There was Messrs. Harridge's vast emporium. One of the doors was open and I went in. I walked through endless showrooms, filled with clothes, books, stationery, silver, plate, glass, all utterly without value or interest to me. Then I came to a large provision department, and my interest quickened. I remembered that I was hungry. There were hundreds of hams, tongues, fowls, quails, and all kinds of things in jelly. Without any scruples I devoured two jolly little quails in aspic and a fruit tart. The wine department was packed with every conceivable wine, spirit, and liqueur, but I am a temperate man, and these things did not tempt me. It was, moreover, very necessary to keep a clear head. I left Messrs. Harridge's and went farther on down Oxford Street. I was passing the premises of a rival bank, and I went in. It was all open ; moreover, the safe was unlocked. I could have helped myself to a bag or two of golden sovereigns and a sack of Treasury notes, but what is the use of five thousand pounds when you cannot even buy the sound of a human voice ?



There were neither shopkeepers nor customers. I could have helped myself to things of untold value.

Just before

reaching Regent Street I had a most emotional experience. On the roof of a hosier's shop I espied a black cat. It was mewing piteously. Now, I have never been very fond of cats, but I suddenly felt an overwhelming desire for the company of this black friend. I ran into the shop and up the stairs. With great difficulty I managed to get on to the roof. The cat had disappeared. What became of it I never knew. I felt terribly affected by losing this cat. I said to myself:—

"William, you are becoming mawkish. You *must* pull yourself together."

I am probably the only man who has ever eaten a cutlet whilst seated on a throne

In Regent Street a cheering sight met my gaze—a florist's shop. I hurried in. There were masses of cut roses, lilac, carnations, and violets. There were plants and dwarf trees in pots. I examined them all carefully. The cut flowers were in water, the plants were growing. The general scheme of things began to take shape in my mind. The world was alive, the sun was in the heavens, the clouds and the good air were just as usual. There was life going on of some sort—flowers, a black cat, a voice on the telephone. It appeared to be just human life conspicuous by its absence. I gathered together a large bunch of dark red roses. I buried my face in them, and clung to them as the only connecting link with the things that mattered. I took them with me on my further pilgrimage down West.

Piccadilly Circus was like a neglected dust-heap. Refuse was scattered here and there. Near the Tube station were holes in the wooden pavement, as though someone had started to dig it up and then gone away. I wandered down the Haymarket, across Trafalgar Square, past Charing Cross, and then to the Embankment. The dear old river looked just the same as usual, except that there was no sign of seagulls or pigeons. The little waves were lapping against the piers of the bridge. The river in any case was another live thing. It was crowded with barges, lighters, and small merchantmen, all idle and deserted. I sought avidly for any sign of smoke. There was none.

I went along the Embankment as far as Westminster, then turned back past the House of Commons and along to the Green Park. The Green Park soothed me. It *was* green, and the trees and bushes were all in leaf. I knelt on the grass and examined it closely. Was it actually growing? or had it reached its crisis and this was the last day of all? I could not tell, but the grass looked fresh and healthy enough.

By the time I reached Buckingham Palace it was a quarter to two, and I felt hungry again. I went into the Palace unchallenged. I wandered about the vast corridors and reception-rooms. At last I came to the kitchens and larders. I found there a profusion of food little less imposing than that at Messrs. Harridge's.

"Well, after all," I thought, "why not? His Majesty would hardly begrudge a meal to his only remaining subject."

I made a fire with wood and coal, and cooked myself a cutlet and boiled some Brussels sprouts (I am very fond of sprouts). I placed the meal on a tray and carried it up to the Throne Room. I sat on the Throne of England and solemnly consumed my cutlet. I am probably the only man who has ever eaten a cutlet whilst seated on a throne. It was not very comfortable, but the irony of the situation pleased me. Humour has never been considered my strong point, but I was sensible enough to see that whatever humour I had must be developed in order to sustain me through my amazing ordeal.

I kept on pinching myself and saying: "Well, of course, all this is simply a dream."

Then I would go to the window and look out. But no, I never felt so vital and awake before in my life. Everything was vivid and tangible. It had not that nebulous quality which characterizes a dream. Something abnormal and supernatural had happened, and I had to face it. I had heard of people finding themselves in colourably similar predicaments—being lost on a desert island, for instance—and I knew that the great thing was to retain one's sanity.

I had really hardly yet begun to think. I was observing and taking my bearings. Serious thinking must come later. I must simply keep sane.

In one of the courtyards of the Palace I came across several large motor-cars. Another bright inspiration came to me. During the war I had had the honour of being allowed to drive a V.A.D. ambulance. I knew quite a bit about cars. I hurried to the first one, a large touring Daimler. To my intense delight, the self-starter acted promptly. I released the clutch and the thing moved. This was perhaps the most satisfactory experience of the day. With a car I could accomplish a great deal. I raced out into the Mall. If need be, I could escape to the country, go up North, or to the coast. There must be life somewhere. Then it occurred to me that it would be an interesting experiment to go first to the Zoo. I returned up Regent Street and I could not help grinning when I realized that I automatically had to toot my horn and slow up at corners. I was at the Zoo in less than fifteen minutes. Leaving the car outside I clambered over the turnstiles. My worst apprehensions were fulfilled. All the animals had vanished. I ran from house to house. There was no living thing. By some of the houses the ground appeared to be scratched up, as though the animals might have scratched their way out and escaped. Here and there I came across bleached bones and skulls. I believe I could have made a life-long friend of a sea-lion if only the thing had been there. Once I thought I saw a mouse scamper across a jackal's cage, but I could not be certain.

I gave up the Zoo and returned to my car. What should I do? After mature reflection I decided to give up going to the country till the morrow. I would thoroughly explore London first. After all there seemed more probability of meeting people, or finding some solution here, rather than among the fields and commons. I went round Regent's Park to the Finchley Road—and then on to Hampstead, keeping my eyes skinned all the time for any appearance of life. I went all through Hampstead and Highgate, and then through Camden Town, Islington, and Highbury. I made my way back to the City and the East-end. I went to St. Paul's Cathedral, and entered it questioningly. The great temple of the people gave me back no answer.

I crawled slowly down Cheapside and Fleet Street. My eyes were constantly intrigued by advertisements. "So-and-so's Soap." "Broadstairs is so Bracing." "A ready-made suit for seventy shillings" "Give her Bovril." "George Robey tonight at the Coliseum."

I *must* keep sane.

LATE in the afternoon I went back to the bank. Nothing had changed. I tried the telephone again, but this time I did not even hear the hum of the wires. I was feeling physically exhausted and mentally overwrought by the day's experience. Where should I spend the night? I had the choice of Buckingham Palace, the Savoy or Carlton, or my own bed. I quickly decided in favour of the latter. But first of all I must have another good meal. It surprised me that in this respect I felt well and eager for good things. I eventually went down to the Carlton, and once more routed out the kitchens. I venture to say that I prepared myself a meal that the *chef* himself would not have been too contemptuous of.

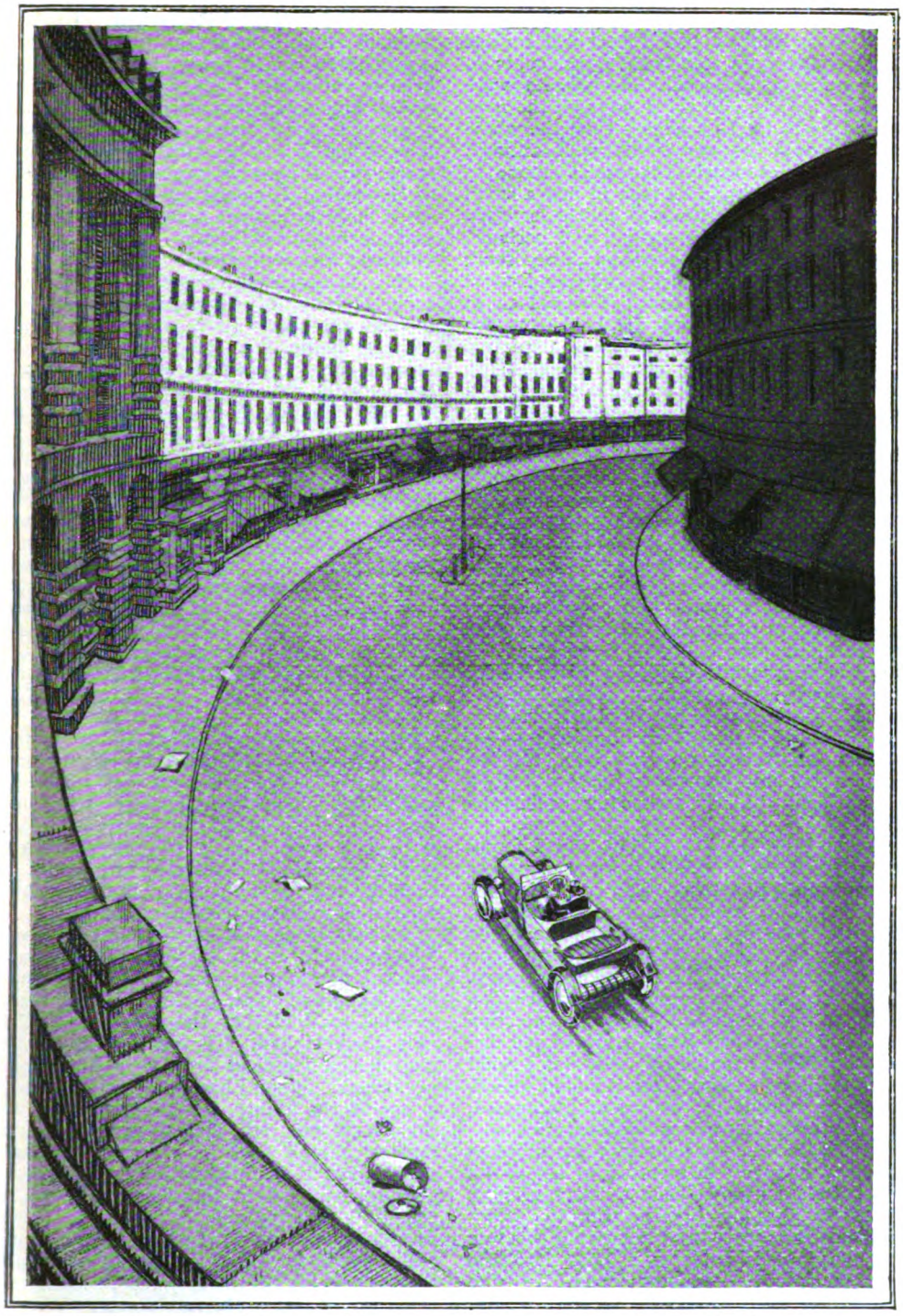
After my dinner I lay back in the lounge in the Carlton and reflected. (I almost wished I had worn evening dress!) It was certainly a situation which demanded profound reflection.

"One shall be taken and the other left."

Assuming that there had been some cataclysmic spiritual manifestation, why should all the others be taken and I left? I carefully reviewed the record of my past life. I could conscientiously say that I had little to reproach myself with. I had always been scrupulously honest, industrious, and sincere. I had been a regular and devout communicant at St. Mary's Church, Marylebone. I had no recollection of ever having done a contemptible or mean action. I may on occasions have been a little quick-tempered, a little uncharitable to my subordinates, but surely not sufficiently so to arouse the wrath of God.

But what was the position? What was God's idea? I found myself alone, and in charge not only of the Southrepps Bank in Baker Street, but of the whole of London. I was King, Prime Minister, and proprietor. I could go and draw out a hundred million pounds in cash to-morrow and drive away—whither?

But more practical details began to impress themselves. At the present moment London was full of fresh food, fruit, and



I decided to explore London thoroughly, keeping my eyes skinned all the time for any appearance of life.

vegetables. On the other hand, there was no electric light or gas. There was no one to attend to the water or the drainage, or to scavenging in general. The streets were already untidy. In a few days all the food would go bad. In a week's time the whole place would be pestilentially insanitary. No, it was obviously the wisest course to clear out. It would be best to find a small house by itself somewhere in the country or near the sea, a house with a well, perhaps. I could take with me stores of tinned food, sufficient to last for years; and then I could grow vegetables and fruit. I would go to one of the libraries and get books on this subject. The sea was the most attractive proposition. Perhaps some foreign ship would come along. Were all countries and cities like this? Possibly not. And yet, there was no suggestion of a local annihilation, no suspicion of poison-gas or plague. In this case there would be the gruesome evidence of dead bodies. Everyone had just vanished. I was entirely alone. And yet—what was that voice on the telephone?

The evening was drawing on. I left the Carlton, drove up the Haymarket in my car, called at a stores, and commandeered several boxes of candles. I could see that another difficulty was going to be bread. I must store quantities of flour, and read up from books how to make bread. In the meantime, there were plenty of dry unsweetened biscuits in tins. I filled up my car—or, rather, His Majesty's car—with all the edibles for my immediate use, and then drove back to my rooms in Motcombe Street.

I was thoroughly worn out, but I found the sight of my small familiar properties comforting. I smoked and reflected for another hour, and then I went to bed. Having persuaded myself that I could do nothing but trust to God and my good conscience, I soon fell into a profound sleep.

I don't know how long I had been sleeping when I was disturbed by a disconcerting noise. I awakened with a start, and listened. When I realized what it was I could extract little comfort from a sound which, although unusual in the room I occupied, was quite familiar as a human experience.

It was the sound of a mouse or rat nibbling in the wainscoting in a corner of the room. Now, it had always been a boast of Mrs. Buswell's that her house was free from vermin of any sort, and I knew that this was no idle boast. I threw a boot into the corner, and the sound ceased. In five minutes' time, however, it started again. When one's nerves are already a little on edge, there is nothing so disconcerting in the stillness of the night as this restless gnaw, gnaw, with the uncertainty of the progress and exact location of the rodent. I lighted a candle and banged on the floor again. Again there was a pause, but only of the briefest duration. I left the candle burning, and so tired was I that after a time I did fall asleep. It must have been several hours later when I awoke with an involuntary start, warned by some foreboding movement of the quilt. I opened my eyes in time to see a large brown rat scuttle from the bed and dart out of sight. My heart beat violently with pure dread.

Now, in nearly all living creatures there is some element of companionableness, but in the rat—no! It is surely the most sinister figure, next to the snake, in all organic life. I yearned for living contact, but with the rat—oh, dear, no! I leapt out of bed. The candle was guttering in its socket, and I quickly lighted another. I shouted and hit the floor with my boots. There was no sign of the rat. However, I found the hole through which he had come, and I feverishly stuffed it up with a towel dipped in paraffin. But I knew I should not sleep again that night. I lighted more candles. I opened my bedroom door an inch or two, and I could not be certain, but I fancied I heard scuttling and scuffling on the linoleum of the passage. I shut the door quickly and spread another towel along the bottom of it.

THAT decided me. First thing in the morning I would load up my car and leave London. It was just what one might have expected. Directly humanity departed, these awful things would come into their own. In a few days London would probably be overrun with rats. I took down a book and read until daylight filtered between the window curtains.

As soon as it was light enough I arose. I went first to see if my good car was outside. I don't know what I thought could have happened to it, but in this crumbling world I realized that the Daimler was the only friend I had. The sight of it in the road beneath almost brought a lump into my throat. When I had breakfasted I made a list of the things I must not forget to take with me, not forgetting petrol and clothes. There would be a certain pleasant satisfaction in rummaging in the big stores, helping myself to a fur overcoat worth a thousand pounds, and choosing the finest linen and wool. Then I would have a clock and a diary, for I decided during the night that, whatever the future held in store for me, I would accept philosophically. Within my capacity I would lead a normal life. I would shave and dress meticulously, as befitted the sub-manager of the Southrepps Bank. And I would set everything down

and keep a record, so that if there were some ultimate solution of this crazy problem I should be in a stronger position to deal with it. Moreover, an ordered and disciplined life would keep me sane.

I made out my list, collected a few household goods, and went out to the car. I put the things in the car, and was just about to board it when an appalling sight met my gaze. I could do nothing but walk round the car and mutter "My God!"

All the four tyres had been gnawed to ribbons!

I thought of my unpleasant visitor of the night and a cold horror gripped my heart. It was not that there was anything very surprising in a rat gnawing through a motor-tyre, but there was a suggestion of deliberation about this. The tyres had not been eaten. They were just ripped to pieces as though for a purpose.

I had to admonish myself roundly for giving way to an explosion of despair.

"All right, William, don't lose your hair. There are plenty of other cars in London. You saw hundreds yesterday."

I remembered that there were three taxi-cabs on the rank in the Marylebone Road. Without hesitating a second I ran down the street and turned the corner. There was no need for me to cross the road. The three cabs were resting on their iron rims, the tyres all flat and torn!

"Steady! Steady!" I thought. "There must be some locked up in garages that the rats wouldn't have been able to get at."

I walked towards the wealthy residential quarters of Portland Place and Harley Street. Some of the garages were locked up, and I had to batter down the doors with iron bars or anything I could find. It was a pilgrimage of despair. I spent the whole morning wandering from street to street, from garage to garage. I inspected hundreds of cars, but not one had a tyre intact.

I lunched at the Carlton again, and attempted to formulate a new plan. Of course, there was nothing to prevent me walking out of London, but how was I to carry all my kit? I might get a barrow and load that up, but it would be an arduous journey, and owing to the sedentary life I had always led I was not very strong, and not a very good walker. London is by no means an easy place to walk out of. It would mean at least a ten or twelve-mile walk, pushing a heavy barrow. But there seemed no alternative. I could not spend another night in this awful city, alone amongst the loathsome creatures.

It took me nearly two hours to find a barrow, which I eventually did in Covent Garden Market. I trundled it up the deserted streets to Messrs. Harridge's. But on my wanderings in search of the barrow I made another significant discovery. You may remember that on the previous day the wooden pavement outside Piccadilly Tube Station gave me the impression that someone had begun to dig it up and had then neglected it. I now discovered that this was something very different. It was a warren of small holes leading into the earth. The same condition prevailed on the Haymarket side of the Tube, and also at Leicester Square and Oxford Circus.

After making this discovery I went tentatively into Piccadilly Tube Station, and went a little way down the spiral staircase till it was too dark to see. A horrible odour assailed my nostrils, and I hastily retreated. So that was it! It required no special astuteness to envisage that vast warren and storehouse beneath, with arteries connecting with the whole underworld of London. I thought of the many evenings I had travelled in the Tubes about theatre time, the gay lighting, pretty women in opera cloaks and jolly youngsters out for an evening's fun, and then with a shudder I thought of it now committed to eternal darkness and foulness, controlled, moreover, by a mysterious cunning and sense of order. The thought was unbearable.

WHEN I arrived at Harridge's with my barrow I was trembling all over. I wandered over the premises with my list, and chose the things I wanted. It took much longer than I had anticipated, and in the course of it I was subjected to further ominous misgivings. For one thing, whereas on the previous day there had been scores of boxes of candles, to-day there was not one in the building. Neither were there any cheeses, lard, or butter. In the provision department some hams which I had suspected of being slightly tainted had disappeared. The fresh food remained untouched. Every room, every floor and partition was honeycombed with holes. Harridge's was being carefully watched.

This experience made me all the more anxious to get away from London.

The barrow was very heavy when I had loaded it up, and I still had to go back to Motcombe Street to collect the things I had left in the car. As it was getting late I decided that I would only go as far as Richmond that night. I would sleep there, and then push on into Surrey the next day.

I tried at several other places to get candles, but they had all disappeared.

By the time I had had a meal and was ready to start it was already sundown. I hesitated as to whether I would try and endure one more night in my Motcombe Street rooms, but my first resolution was

fortified by the discovery that all the candles I had taken home the previous day had also disappeared. I could have a fire, but otherwise the evening would have to be spent in darkness.

I added the final touches to my strange outfit and started off down the Marylebone Road. I decided to walk to Hammersmith, go across Barnes Bridge, and so on to Richmond that way. I reckoned on a good two hours' walk. But in doing so I had not allowed for inevitable rests. For the first few hundred yards the barrow load did not seem unduly heavy, but by the time I had reached Hyde Park I felt as though I were pushing a railway truck laden with coal. I was panting and puffing, and my hands were chafed and my back ached. I took a good rest and started again. All along the side of the Park as far as Notting Hill I had to rest every dozen yards or so. When I reached Shepherd's Bush I felt doubtful whether I could proceed. I was quite done up, and it was already getting dark. I rested disconsolately on the edge of the barrow. Whilst doing so, my eye caught sight of a rather gaudy public-house. I had never in my life entered one of these places, but it flashed through my mind that here was an occasion when the most fastidious could hardly grieve at my defection. I entered the saloon bar. There was no lack of every conceivable alcoholic refreshment. I drank a wineglassful of neat brandy, and added the bottle to my effects. At the same time I discarded some of my tinned food in order to lighten the load. The effect of the brandy temporarily ameliorated the outlook, but I was very weary and feverishly anxious to get on. I had an impatient desire to get to the other side of the river. I felt I would rather sleep in the open in Richmond Park, or on Barnes Common, than endure another night in any of these unlighted and cheerless houses. Moreover, I tried several times to dissuade myself from accepting a conscious realization—things already moving and scurrying in the fringes of the coming darkness!

As I struggled on painfully towards Hammersmith Broadway I became gradually obsessed by a terrifying conviction. *I was being watched!* A dark power was encircling me, and when the moment came, I—I could not tell what would happen, but I knew that I should no longer be master of my fate. I kept to the middle of the road and prayed for strength. Just past the Broadway a swarm of black objects swung in a body across my barrow from left to right. A minute later another swarm swung across from right to left. I looked back, and I became aware of a vast semicircle of black movement following me.

Before I had reached Barnes Bridge I knew that I could not go on. In any case, I could not go on with my load. I would discard my barrow and run for it, chancing to find on the other side of the river the necessities I needed. Perhaps on the morrow I could return and reclaim my property in daylight. I left the barrow and strode forward swinging a stick. It was less than a hundred yards to the bridge, but before I had reached it I knew that I was defeated. A pale moon was up and I could see sufficient. It was not so much numbers that paralysed my will to go on as the sense that at the back of them was an ordered plan, a sinister intelligence. I'm afraid I gave way to a moment of self-pity. I saw myself, the conscientious and scrupulous sub-manager of the Southrepps Bank, a pitiable figure, struggling to do his duty, and to behave as became a Christian gentleman, and then—hemmed in and mastered by a dark, unjust fate.

AS I stood by the bridge, uncertain how to act, I was suddenly startled by a new amazement. Creeping along the near bank was a small tramp steamer or freighter. It was moving. There was smoke coming out of the funnel. I could almost swear that I could see the figure of a man at the wheel. Then, as I peered more eagerly, I was certain that, though there might be a man at the wheel, the deck of the steamer was swarming with that same dark restless movement. At the top of my voice I yelled out :—

"Hullo! Hullo, there! Who's that? Land, I say, for God's sake!"

The steamer crept under the bridge and appeared the other side. I rushed to it and screamed out again :—

"Hullo! Hullo! I say. Is that a man? For God's sake, land!"

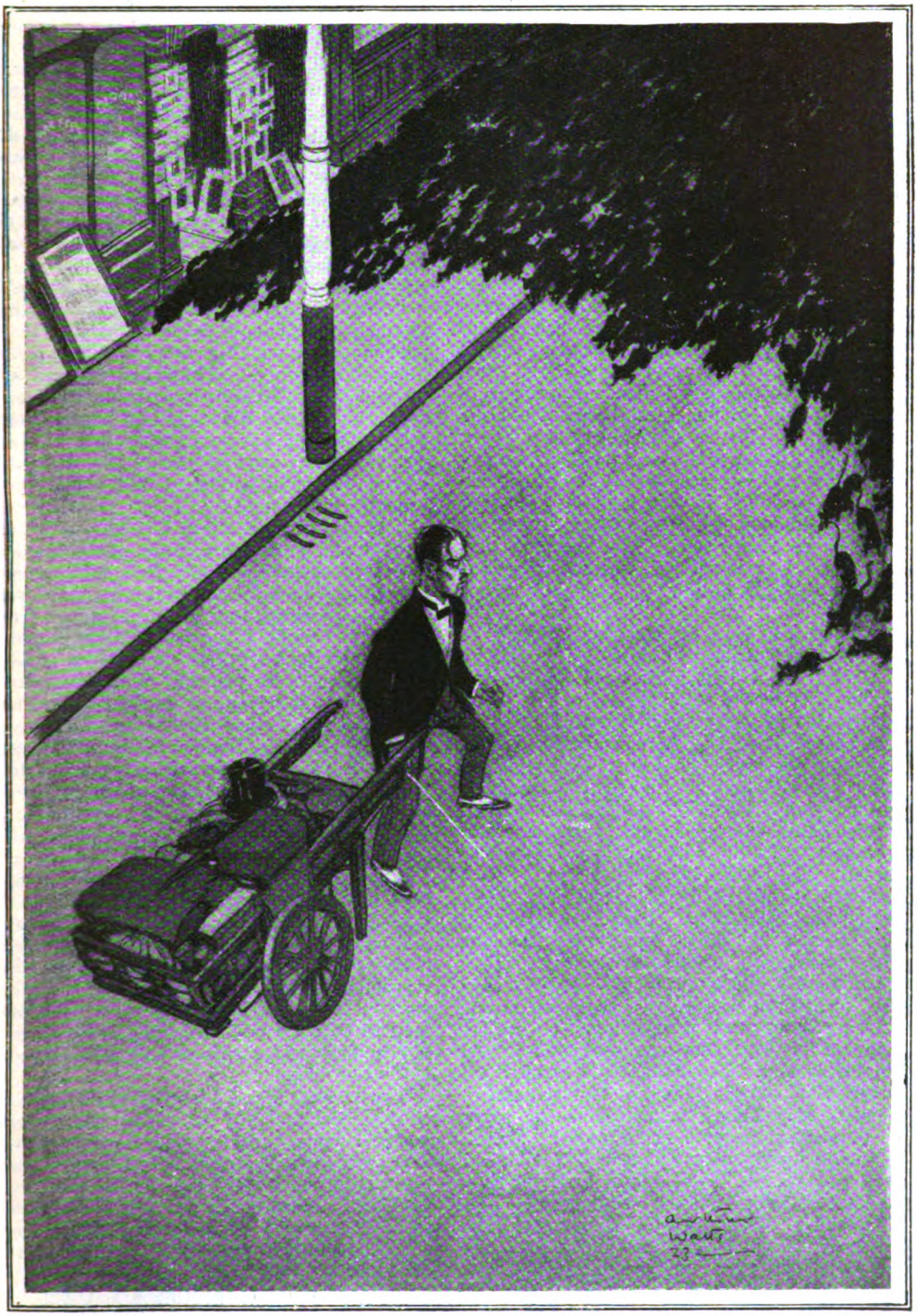
I waited. There was a noise of squeaking and the rushing of water. As the steamer began to crawl out of sight, I could swear I heard a husky answer :—

"I can't. They won't let me!"

I groaned and cried out again, but no further answer came back.

Then, indeed, was I becoming desperate. Why did the creatures not attack me and make an end? I was utterly at their mercy. For a moment I hesitated whether I would not rush on to the bridge and throw myself into the river, but the idea of suicide has always appeared to me to be of all crimes next to murder, the most irreligious. No, I would fight to the end.

I walked back to my barrow, my consciousness almost numbed into indifference. So absorbed was I with my spiritual tribulations that I hardly heeded the movements



I stood by the barrow and waited patiently, stick in hand. The whole cavalcade appeared to be closing in on me.

of my black masters. I stood by the barrow hesitating, and then the strangest thing of all happened. I became aware of concentric movements, of swerves and formations, like an army at manœuvres.

"Now," I thought, "it's coming. Well, let it be quick——"

I was in the middle of the road, and I could see fairly well. I waited patiently, stick in hand. The manœuvres seemed suddenly to come to a stop, as though the Generalissimo had achieved a perfect formation. Then two bodies detached themselves and took up positions on either side of me. I could even see their leaders gleaming menacingly on the flanks. And then a third smaller body approached between them. It was apparently conveying a large dark object. The whole cavalcade appeared to be closing in on me, and then it suddenly retreated, leaving the dark object at my feet.

I peered down. It was a large brown rat, a very prince of rats, an enormous fellow. He was wounded in the right leg, whether through fighting or through falling on a sharp object I could not say. The command was obvious. I was being watched by ten thousand specks of light.

I PRAISED God for the thoroughness of my preparations before leaving Harridge's. I had a first-aid outfit, and during the war I had picked up a little knowledge of the valuable craft. I took the things from the barrow, being careful to show no signs of hurry or suspicion. Then I knelt down and bathed the wound, which was bleeding, applied some antiseptic, and bound it up with a clean bandage. I did it as well as I possibly could. The brown rat never stirred. As a brilliant afterthought I smeared a little brandy over his nose. I could not be sure how this would affect him, but I thought the experiment might be worth while. Then I drew apart and waited, to show that the operation was over. Followed a lot of squeaking and whispering, the movement of further formations, and the removal of the invalid. Nonchalantly I strolled off down the street back to Hammersmith. I went unmolested, nevertheless the sense of depression became accentuated. Before I was in open warfare; now I felt that I was a slave. If I was useful to them they would neither kill me nor let me go.

Strolling back towards Kensington the truth of the whole situation began to dawn on me. The voice on the telephone, the black cat, the man on the steamer, myself—Humanity was not defunct. It had simply been superseded. The earth was now dominated by the rat. Man was a subsidiary and servile creature. A few human beings would be allowed to live, provided they served some useful purpose in the rodentary scheme of things.

In Kensington I found a large private hotel. I was tired, dazed, and beaten. I stumbled in and found my way to a room on the top floor. I struck matches, and satisfied myself that there were no holes in the floor or walls. Then I threw myself on to the bed and fell into a heavy sleep.

It was, of course, only to wake later to the abrupt irritation of that gnaw, gnaw, gnaw in the skirting.

"I shall go mad!" I whispered. Then:—

"William, if ever there was a time to pull yourself together it is now. What is to prevent you walking out of London tomorrow morning? They don't come out in daylight. Get right away into the clean, sweet air of the country, and leave everything. Better to die of starvation or exposure than endure this. Besides, who knows but that you may find a colony of humans somewhere?"

The gnawing went on, but I slept by fits and starts. My fears were somehow less directly personal. I felt that my services to the old brown rat would in some way secure me from immediate attack. Once during the night I know that a rat scuttled across the bed. I had no candles, and I was too weary to protest. What would be the good? If I went to another room they would quickly make their way thither. I tried to visualize London a hundred years hence, a mouldy ruin entirely perforated, like an old leaf that has been pressed between the leaves of a book and forgotten. It seemed surprising that it was less than forty-eight hours ago that I had been in this metamorphosed existence, and it already held me in an ice-cold grip of fatality. If I could consider the matter logically and dispassionately I might be able to persuade myself that I was despairing too rapidly, surrendering too easily. But I was enveloped by an atmosphere in which logic seemed to have no place, reason no throne. A few days and nights of this and I should be an old man.

The dawn at last. I rose hastily and began to dress. I had not completed my toilette before I was confronted with a new disaster. *The soles of my boots had been eaten!* There was again in this the menace of deliberate purpose. There could have been no reason to have eaten my boots for the nourishment they contained. London was chock-full of food. I wandered over the hotel. I found five pairs of gentlemen's boots. In each case the soles had been destroyed. On the other hand, I found seven pairs of ladies' shoes. They were untouched. Why?

So soon as I had consumed a hasty meal

I hurried out into the street in my socks. After a brief search I found a bootmaker's shop. One glance satisfied me. All the boxes had been pulled down, eaten into, and the soles of the boots destroyed. Even some ladies' boots of the larger kind were destroyed; but there were plenty of the latter with Louis heels and useless pointed toes. The thing was diabolic. Could I walk out of London in my socks? In any case I would try. It was my only hope. I bound my feet up in thick bandages, after covering them with vaseline. On the top of this I wore two pairs of thick socks.

This time I would go North, where there was no river to cross. I made up a small parcel of food and a change of clothing and set forth. I will not distress you with a description of that journey. It was a dull record of pain, weariness, and mental anguish. I lost all sense of time or space. Sometimes I would rest on a doorstep and nibble at my food. A curious conviction came over me that I was instinctively imitating the rats' method of eating. It was again nearly dark before I found that the houses were getting more widely separated, and there were occasional lapses of fields and open spaces. Even then—there would be many miles to go before I was clear of it all.

I had nearly reached the end of my tether, and was passing a red-brick wall that might have been the outside wall of some institution, when suddenly I thought I heard the sound of a cry on the other side of the wall—a human cry! With a superhuman effort I leapt at the wall and scrambled to the top. Just on the other side I beheld a woman. She was kneeling down and collecting something from the ground. In the most futile and inane fashion I called out:—

"Hullo! Good evening!"

She turned her face to me. It was the saddest face I have ever seen. At the sight of me it expressed neither relief nor pleasure. It simply looked utterly hopeless and scared. I said:—

"Who are you? Will you come with me? Let us escape——"

She looked round with a terrified glance, and muttered:—

"No, no, no."

"Why not?"

"They won't let me."

"Who won't?"

"The Masters."

And then with a groan she ran across the courtyard, and darted through a gate which she slammed after her.

THEN I knew that all was finished. I was a creature in revolt. I gripped my stick. I would not avoid rats any longer. I would seek them out. I would attack, and die fighting for what I represented.

I stumbled on to the next house I came to, a bleak buff-brick villa. I stamped into the hall and cried out:—

"Come on, you devils!"

A new strength seemed to enter my limbs. I went into a dark room and struck at the floor and walls with my stick. But as the strength came so it oozed away. Something unaccountable was happening to me. I fell on to a couch and groaned. I seemed to be rushing through space, through a noisy channel. At the other end sounds detached themselves. I distinctly heard a voice say:—

"Hullo, old man, that's better!"

There was an interval, and then the same voice said:—

"Hullo, William, old man, you're all right now, eh? You understand? You're all right."

The voice was strikingly familiar. Tom—of course, Tom Stokes. What was he doing in this God-forsaken place? What place? Where was I?

"You remember it all now, old man, don't you? We were having a jolly talk about Bernard Shaw and Dean Inge——"

Dean Inge! The gloomy Dean, they called him. Something snapped and cleared. I remembered a lot of things.

"I'll never forgive myself, old man. We were talking—a jolly talk about what could happen to humanity. You leant over the fireplace, knocking your pipe out. I reached up to get a spill, and, like the clumsy ass I am, I knocked that big vase right over. It fell on to your head. They've had to put in a couple of stitches. You're all right now, old man, eh?"

More familiar than Tom's voice—the cosy security of my own room. More dear to me than Tom's face—the eyes of my wife welcoming me back. Queer, that all that part of my life had been forgotten, that I should have jumped back to the time when I was a sub-manager at a small bank. Queer——

What could happen to humanity? The gloomy Dean, the gloomy Dean. Yes——

Yes, I remembered it all.

Thank God!

"Excuse me," said the traveller. "Can you tell me if that chap Miller has got off to-day?"

"THE PRISONER LEAVES THE COURT"

by C.W. Shepherd

ILLUSTRATED BY E.G. OAKDALE

THERE was nothing in the expression of Mr. Justice Blair to indicate his approval or disapproval of the jury's verdict. He merely leaned forward, a little petulantly, perhaps, and ordered the release of the accused, thus writing "Finis" on the last page of the Dodd's Farm murder case.

Charles Miller, farmer, in the words of the reporters, "cast a quick glance round the court and disappeared from view," acquitted of the crime of murdering Aynam Rhodes, farmer also.

Except in cases of unusual interest, little is told of the movements of a man acquitted of the crime of murder; yet many must wonder how he spends the first precious hours of his release. One hardly imagines him—the centre of so dramatic a scene—leaving the court by the prosaic means of a solitary taxi-drive to the station. One likes to think of affectionate reunions with friends, of dinners with counsel; but none of these things was for Charles Miller. Certainly his solicitor met him, hoping that he would take dinner with him, and meet counsel afterwards over a cigar instead of a brief; but Miller was in no mood for it.

"Thank you, Mr. Freene," he said, "but until I leave these Assizes and all connected with them behind me I sha'n't believe I'm free. I want to get away and rest. You talk as though I've won a prize for a show of roots and want to celebrate it. God! Can't you imagine what to-day has meant to me? Bah! You lawyers! You've no feeling in your souls. No, no, Mr. Freene, I don't mean that. You know I don't. You've done well for me—but I'm almost insane. D'ye hear me, insane, and shall be till I get away from here."

Mr. Freene saw the state of Miller's nerves, and thus it came about that the latter, in a heavy coat and pulled-down hat, arrived at the station in time to catch a train which would, eventually, bear him to the junction

near Doddington. He was not noticed on the platform. He feared he might encounter some witnesses returning to Doddington; but witnesses from Doddington were not in an Assize town every day, and did not leave earlier than they needed. Almost furtively he entered a compartment.

It was odd to be in a train. During his long wait between the magistrates' hearing and the Assizes he had often wondered if he would ever be in one again. Subconsciously the train had represented to him the distance between Doddington and the Assize town—between life and death.

Sitting back and eyeing his two fellow-travellers narrowly, he thought over the past few days. Lord! how the Crown counsel had put him through the mill! But he had stood it.

And now! Miller almost laughed aloud as he saw himself a free man again. Presently his thoughts were interrupted by one of the two men in the compartment, a cheery individual, obviously a professional man. Somehow, his mode of addressing Miller reminded him of lawyers.

"Excuse me," said the traveller. "Can you tell me if that chap Miller has got off to-day? They have been trying him here, I think."

If Miller was confused he did not betray himself. "Yes, he has got off," he said. "I heard some boys crying the result as I came up to the station."

"Queer case," said the other. "Murdered by Miller's door after he'd been to see Miller. I hardly thought he would get off; did you?"

"I—er—rather thought he would," said Miller. "After all, they never found the revolver, and he could hardly have hidden it successfully in his own house. He never left the house till the police came."

"No," put in the third man. "I read that detectives searched every inch of the house, and he had certainly had no chance of hiding it outside, seeing that the police were there so soon."

"Of course, that was one of the great points of the defence. One would have thought that they would have found it somewhere. Still, I rather think he did it."

The other man smiled.

"Of course, there are always plenty who say that after a murder trial. Surely the jury had the best chance of judging."

"That is what I think," said Miller. "And you would hardly expect a man to commit murder just because he wanted to buy the next farm to his. The motive is thin."

Miller took up a daily paper which he had found in the compartment and affected to read it, whilst he carefully listened to the conversation.

The other man, who might have been a business man, did not appear to have read a great deal about the case, and Miller leaned back and listened to the crime being reconstructed by the other.

He heard how the accused man had held a mortgage on the adjoining farm, and of how Aynam Rhodes, its owner, was perilously near to letting it go to Miller—grasping chap, Miller—and of how he had been found murdered by Miller's door. And then it had transpired at the inquest that a relative of Rhodes had produced the money to pay off the mortgage, robbing Miller of all hopes of turning the two farms into one.

After a time the conversation lulled, and the business man raised his feet to the seat and leaned back wearily.

"I've had a heavy day," he said, catching Miller's eye, and preparing to doze.

"So have I," said Miller, closing his own eyes. "A very heavy one."

Had he not closed his eyes he might have seen the professional man lean forward and whisper one word, to the other's astonishment.

WHEN Miller reached his farm at Doddington he found it in darkness. He was a single man, and the only other dwellers in his house were his housekeeper and a farm-girl. Since his arrest the house had been empty.

He wondered if they had heard of the verdict in Doddington. He had telegraphed to no one, for he was a man with few friends. He had hardly expected to find anyone in, for he was not sure that the trial would be finished that day; and in any case, who would expect an acquitted man to take a taxi from the Assizes and catch a train within half an hour of the verdict being given?

They had recognized him at Doddington Station, of course, and they would be talking about him in the village during his two-mile walk home. The station-master had said, "Glad to see you back, Mr. Miller," but Miller had hardly heard him.

The house felt clammy as he closed the heavy oak door behind him and walked across the hall. His steps echoed through the old place, and he fumbled hurriedly for a match. The house was empty, yet he did not feel alone. Nerves. Only to be expected after what he had gone through. What was that? He thought he heard a sound and listened. It came again. Ah, that was it. It was the dead coal in the grate falling. They had not even cleaned out the grate.

And he could not find the paraffin, and the lamp was empty.

Feeling his way to the Jacobean dresser, he fumbled until he found an old Sheffield plate candlestick containing a candle. He lit it and made his way to the fireplace, and sat down heavily on the old oak screen.

A queer home-coming, he thought.

It then occurred to him that he had had no food all day. They had pressed him during the luncheon hour to take something. Wanted him to eat!

But he must have something now.

He walked across the stone-flagged floor to the pantry and tried not to hear the echo of his steps. The home-made cheese had not been removed, anyhow, and he cut a piece from it and went back to the fireplace.

BUT why should not he have a fire? He was forgetting that he had come back home. This was his house, and why should he sit beside an empty grate on a cold night like this? He went through the back-kitchen and brought an armful of wood. His dog was gone. He wondered who had got him. That was one of the things he must see to first thing in the morning.

The crackle of the burning wood cheered him somewhat, and he took out his pipe and reached his tobacco jar down from the mantelpiece. And then he heard a sound again. He was sure of it this time. Someone was walking about overhead. It was a queer tread, almost like bare feet shuffling.

Miller shuddered and sat quite still with pipe and matches in his hand. He heard the steps descend the stairs and stop. Someone, whoever it was, was now in the hall. Miller took out his handkerchief and wiped his brow. He didn't like it. Could it be nerves again? Surely the Assizes could not have made such a mess of him as all that? Then he heard the steps again.

It could not be his housekeeper or the girl. They would have come down when they heard him come in.

The fire crackled and the flame shot up, illuminating the big farm kitchen with its two grandfather clocks and its old refectory table. Then the light died down and the candle grew dim.

The shuffling noise had started again. Someone was coming into the room. He heard the door click.

He sat stiffly and gazed in the direction of the door as a figure shuffled into the room. Miller gasped and a shiver went through him.

"Go away!" he cried. "Go away, Rhodes."

But Rhodes came on.

With terrified eyes Miller regarded the figure of the murdered man, white-faced and staring.

A black streak showed clearly on the side of the pallid face. Was it black? No, it was red. He could see it clearly now. He cried again:—

"Go away, for the Lord's sake!"

But Aynam Rhodes came on until he was by the chair on the opposite side of the fireplace, where he seated himself.

For a moment there was no sound in the room except for the frightened gasps of Miller.

Then the other spoke.

"You did it, you know, really."

Miller continued to gaze in silence at the mocking figure in the chair opposite. There was a grin on Aynam Rhodes's face. —half sardonic, half triumphant.

"And very cleverly, too!" continued Rhodes, thrusting forward his grey face.

Miller made an effort to reply.

"You—you are not dead after all?" he stammered. "They said it was murder."

"And it was murder. A dirty murder. You know it . . ."

Rhodes pointed with a clammy white forefinger and Miller shrank back.

"Don't! Don't!" he cried. "Leave me alone!"

"Leave you alone!" the other laughed scornfully. "Do you deserve to be left alone? What you deserve is to be under sentence of death. And you shall die yet!"

Miller sat upright again with a show of courage.

"No, I sha'n't die!" he whispered. "They can't find out now. It's too late. They couldn't find the revolver. Not guilty! Ha, ha!"

"Where did you hide the revolver?" asked Rhodes.

"You don't think I'll tell you?" said Miller. He was growing bolder. He'd show Rhodes that he wasn't a fool. If he'd been a fool he'd have been in the condemned cell now! That Crown counsel . . .

"Where did you hide that revolver?" repeated Rhodes. "Surely you owe me that much. What did you do with it? I've got one of your bullets here"—Rhodes tapped his temple—"and I'd like to know where the revolver is."

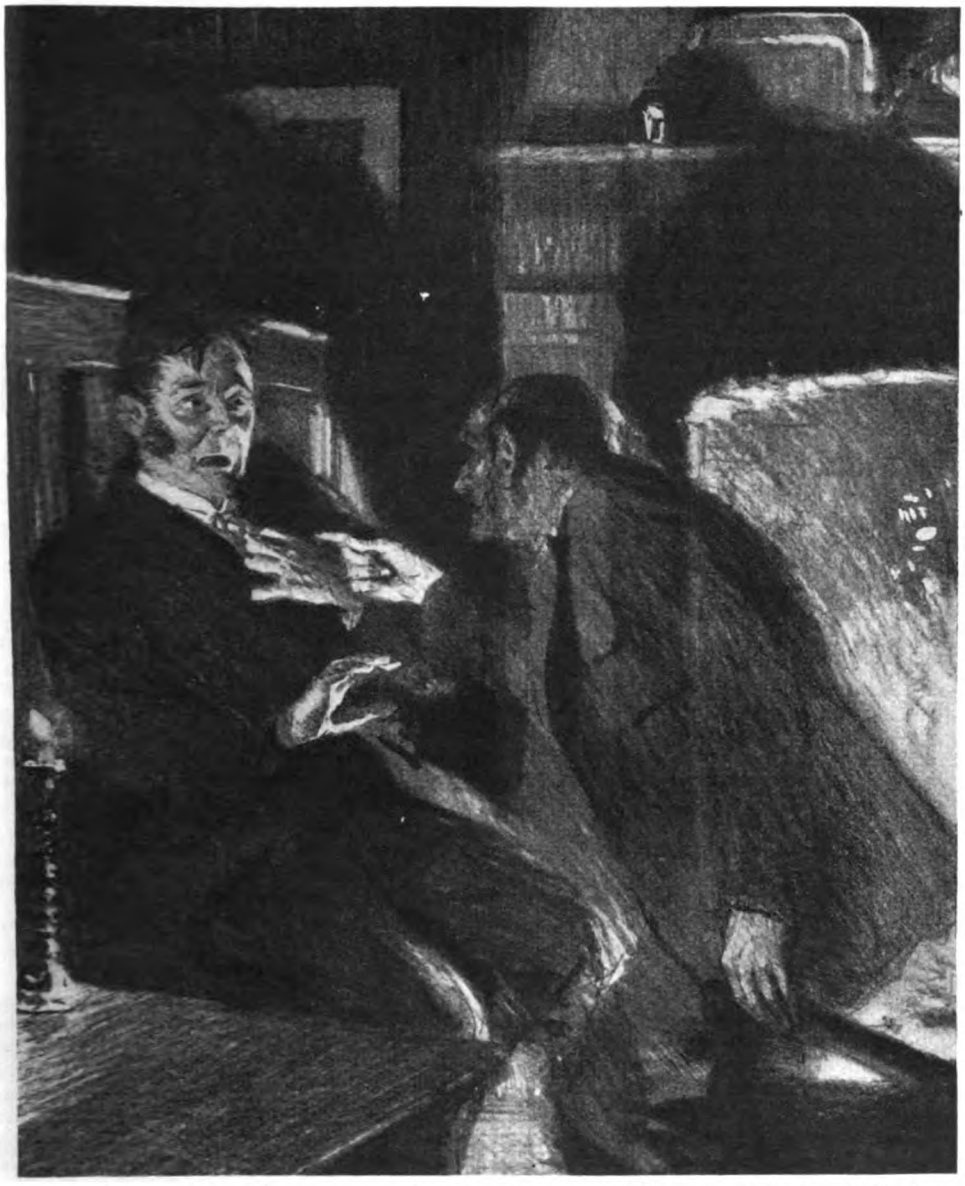
"Well, you won't know," said Miller decisively.

Aynam Rhodes rose from his chair.

"Where is the revolver?" he asked again.

Miller did not reply. Rhodes had moved a step nearer and Miller put out his hand as though to hold him off.

"Go away!" he cried, as fear took possession of him again. "I'm free. This is my house. Go away!"



Rhodes pointed with a clammy white forefinger and Miller shrank back. "Don't! Don't!" he cried. "Leave me alone!"

But Rhodes shuffled still nearer. His eyes shone with a phosphorescent glow. The clammy forefinger still pointed and the red smudge on the grey flesh seemed more livid.

Miller leapt from his seat and took refuge behind it.

"Go back!" he almost shrieked. "I'll tell you where the revolver is, but don't come any nearer—for God's sake!"

The half-triumphant grin reappeared on the pallid face. Miller saw it and quivered.

"Quick!"

"It's in the Bible," whispered Miller; "in the old clasp Bible. There—in the book-shelf on the right. Now leave me—leave me alone."

Rhodes shuffled across the red-tiled floor towards the book-case.

Miller's hand stole towards the poker.

Then he laughed and withdrew it. Who ever heard of killing the same man twice?

Aynam Rhodes took down the great family Bible and brought it back to the fireside. The fire was out now, and the candle guttering. Miller shuddered at the thought of being left in the darkness with Rhodes. And there were no more candles.

Rhodes placed the Bible on the hearth-rug between them and sat down.

"Show me," he said. "Show me just where it is. This is a Bible, not a box."

Miller came from behind the chair.

"That's what the police thought," he laughed, with a touch of his old boldness. "But the revolver is in the Bible all right. See!"

He bent down and took the Bible from the cloth rug and unfastened the stiff clasp. Then he opened the book at the beginning and held it out towards Rhodes.

"They never thought of looking in there!" he said, gloating as he examined a large hollow which had been cut in the block of pages and in which lay wedged a revolver.

"You artful hound!" said Rhodes.

"They never thought of looking there!" repeated Miller. "They turned the whole place inside out, took up the flooring, pulled down the wainscoting and Heaven knows what else, but they never thought of the Bible. And they'll never find it now. It's going in the river in the morning—up by the mill where it's muddy. It's a foot deep in mud up there."

"You artful hound!" repeated Rhodes, taking the Bible on his own knee. "But you're not quite artful enough."

"What do you mean?" asked Miller.

Rhodes had taken the revolver out of its hiding-place and was turning it over in his white clammy hands.

"I mean," he said, "that this thing is still loaded, and I'm going to shoot you—give you a dose of what you gave me."

He raised the revolver, but Miller acted quickly. He brought his hand down upon the guttering candle and immediately they were in darkness. Then he crept round the table to the door. He heard Rhodes chuckling aloud and shuddered. When he reached the door he put out his hand, but, instead of the knob, he touched something icy and moist. He shrieked. It was a human face—wet and sticky on one side. And again he heard Rhodes laugh.

He ran back round the table.

"Spare me, for God's sake!" he cried.

Then there was a report which seemed to bring the room tumbling down about him, and it suddenly became light. He sat up, half-dazed, and saw two men standing over him. He was in a railway carriage. . . . Something in the eyes of the two men filled him with great alarm.

"Have I been talking?" he gasped, with half-conscious imprudence.

"Yes, Mr. Miller," said the taller of the men, as they seated themselves. "You have said a great deal. I may say that I suspected your identity before you fell asleep. You have had a bad dream, I think."

Miller was thinking quickly.

"You would have had a bad dream, too, after a day like this day has been to me. Can you wonder at it? Can you imagine what my brain must be like—the strain—the suspense? I must have talked an uncommon lot of nonsense."

"Whether it was nonsense, Mr. Miller is not for us to say. We propose to——"

"But it was nonsense, mister," interrupted Miller. "My mind must have been in a ferment—and still is. Most extraordinary dream. I suppose—I suppose I was talking about revolvers?"

"You talked about *a* revolver," said the second man. "Rather a special one, I think. The one in the Bible, you know."

The colour left Miller's face.

"Go on," he said. "Go on, it's—it's interesting. What else did I say?"

"I think—I think we had better not say any more about it now," said the professional-looking man.

Miller stood up, and an unpleasant look came into his eyes.

"*Now*," he repeated. "Not say anything more about it *now*. I suppose you are going to hand me over again, and they'll search the house afresh, and all that?"

Miller looked questioningly at the two men for a few moments, but neither of them replied.

"Well, you can just reckon yourselves disappointed," he said.

And then, before either of the two travellers guessed his intention, he turned the handle of the door and sprang from the train into the darkness.

For a moment the two men gazed, startled, at each other; then the one rose and pulled the communication cord.

"Of course," said the professional-looking man when Miller's body was finally placed in the waiting-room of a wayside station, "of course a man cannot be tried again for the same murder. Miller would have been quite safe. But evidently he didn't know that."

"It seems as though Justice wasn't letting herself be cheated," said the other. "For Heaven's sake give me another pull at that brandy!"

SALUTE THE CAVALIER!

BY

MICHAEL ARLEN

ILLUSTRATED BY W. SMITHSON BROADHEAD

I.

THE Felix Waites, as everyone knows, are the most exclusive people in Hampstead. Mrs. Felix Waite was a Hampshire Bates before she became a Hampstead Waite; and since the war, with its attendant new people, the family have become so aristocratic that they can scarcely speak, for Mrs. Felix Waite says that everyone talks too much nowadays. When they do speak it is only of the simplest things, like murder, farming, or Christian Science, and if you should begin to get restless under it they just look at you. The Felix Waites are understood to spend most of their time in the country, where they entertain only very small parties. There was a time when they spent anxious moments about their only son, Thomas, but all that is over now. Once upon a time young Thomas did the superman on them about a chorus-girl, and broke away. Young Thomas had never fancied himself as an aristocrat, and so he did not marry the chorus-girl at once; but he said he would, and in the meanwhile he concentrated on making money. He was understood to be making big money—so big that he could inhabit a suite of rooms at the Ritz for a week, sign the bill in pencil, and get away before the hotel clerks had rubbed the dazzle of his sapphire tie-pin out of their eyes. But one day young Thomas forgot to wear his tie-pin, whereupon he sojourned in Brixton Prison for two days and four hours while he tried to imagine the expression on his father's face on hearing of his son's latest telegraphic address. However, Mr. Felix Waite paid up like a gentleman; as he did everything else like a gentleman, so that you could scarcely tell the difference. That is the only time a Felix Waite has ever stayed with King George, but they do not mention it. Whether the chorus-girl became a footlight favourite or just faded away was never known. Young Thomas married county.

It occurred to Mrs. Felix Waite, during the season of 1922, that she might give a garden-party. There was a something about a garden-party, a certain elegance, which, Mrs. Felix Waite thought, was certainly lacking in a ball. Everyone, after all, can give a ball; whereas, except for the King and the Queen, very few can give a garden-party in London; for the central idea of a garden-party is that it be held in a garden, and gardens in London are rarer than the jewels on the Mikado's brow. Now Mrs. Felix Waite had a spacious garden; and about it the walls were so high that the youth of Hampstead Heath had to stand on each other's shoulders to catch a glimpse of the garden life of the gentry.

II.

THE garden-party was a great success. Quite half the people who were asked came, and nearly all the people who weren't. The fact that it poured with rain from three o'clock onwards might have interfered with the pleasure of the company had not Mrs. Felix Waite been a woman of invention and, with great presence of mind, held the garden-party in her spacious drawing-rooms; thereby, some have thought, changing the garden-party to an At Home or Afternoon Reception, but that is a matter for argument.

Among those present was Mr. Michael Wagstaffe, the young gentleman who called himself, with perhaps too much pomp, the cavalier of the streets; a list of what other people called him might be of interest, but could have no bearing on this story. It was not a habit with the cavalier of the streets to go to garden-parties, or to parties

of any kind, for in London there were not a few people who would have been pleased to meet him just once more. However, on this occasion he had happened to be passing Mrs. Felix Waite's house towards six o'clock, and, hearing music and being thirsty, had walked in. Not long after he walked out. But he had not walked more than a few yards when someone caught his shoulder, and an abrupt voice said :—

"Come back, you ! "

Mr. Michael Wagstaffe turned round. "I never drink with strangers," he said, proudly.

"Come on, now," said the gruff man, impatiently. "No one can leave that house just yet. And we want you particularly—just to ask you a few questions."

"A detective ! " sighed Mr. Wagstaffe. "I knew it ! For his clothes are very plain."

They started back, the plain-clothes man holding his arm. It was still raining hard—one of those afternoons when people paid to watch it rain on a nice new tarpaulin at the new tennis-courts at Wimbledon.

"I return under protest," said Mr. Wagstaffe, "though I wouldn't object to an umbrella as well."

"We know *you*," the plain-clothes man grinned disagreeably. "We know *you*. And I've had my eye on you in there—you weren't invited, you weren't."

"There's an unaccountable prejudice against famous war co-respondents," sighed the young man.

They walked up the soaked red strip of carpet into the spacious portico, through the spacious portico into the spacious lounge hall, and into a little room. The garden-party, it seemed, was still in full swing in the drawing-rooms ; there was music, there was gaiety, but in the little room downstairs were only the plain-clothes man and the cavalier of the streets. Methodically, the plain-clothes man began to search the cavalier's pockets. Contentedly, the cavalier let him.

"If it's cigarette-cards for your children you're looking for," he said, "I'm afraid I left my collection at home. And if it's not cigarette-cards, what the deuce *are* you looking for ? "

"Diamond," said the detective. "Off with your shoes now."

"I always was a devil for diamonds. Whose diamond ? "

"Lady of the house lost famous diamond ring. Come on now, off with your shoes."

"If you are worthy enough to untie them," grinned Mr. Wagstaffe, and held out a wet and very muddy shoe. But there were no diamond rings in Mr. Wagstaffe's shoes.

"Good-bye," said Mr. Wagstaffe, amiably.

"Au revoir," the detective grinned. He was annoyed. "You'll see more of me, *Mr.* Wagstaffe. Call on you soon, perhaps."

The young man turned round at the door.

"Going to search all the guests ? " he asked.

"Course not. But you had no right in the house. You was loitering suspiciously."

"Going to search the other people who came unasked ? " asked Mr. Wagstaffe, gently.

"Don't pull any of that on me, young man," said the plain-clothes man. "You was the suspicious character on the premises when the diamond ring was stolen, and you'll hear more of it."

The cavalier of the streets advanced gently upon the plain-clothes man, and he smiled upon him dangerously.

"If you knew more of your London," said he, "you would know that there were at least five other suspicious characters in this house, of whom not more than two could have been invited. And the next time you come near me, you half-baked village idiot, you had better bring a posse along with you for protection ; for at one more word from you I will smite you in such a manner that if you don't fall down instantly I shall have to run behind you to see what's holding you up. Good afternoon."

As Mr. Wagstaffe emerged from the little room into the spacious hall a young lady passed him towards the door. She passed swiftly, intently, and sweetly, for she was a pretty young lady. She was dressed like a flower, a flower from a garden sweeter than the spacious garden of Mrs. Felix Waite, and as she passed by the cavalier of the streets a faint scent pierced the rain-sodden air of the outer hall.

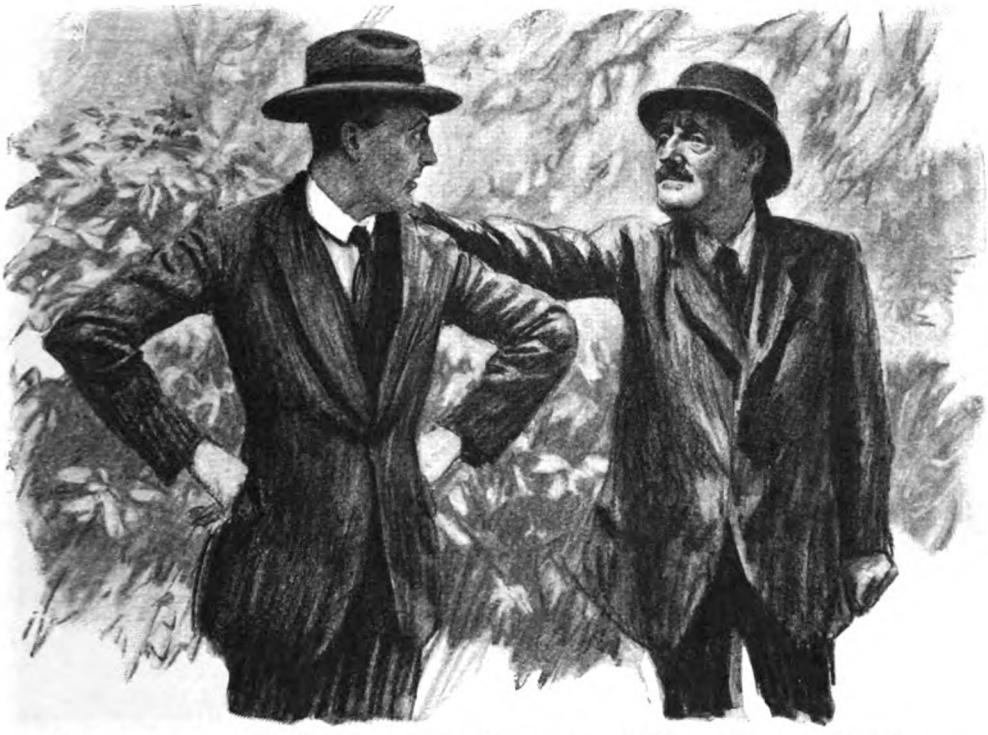
"Chypre," thought Mr. Wagstaffe, for it was his business to know these things.

"Good afternoon," said Mr. Wagstaffe, amiably ; but the young lady, the very smart young lady, passed him without a glance, into the waiting taxicab outside.

The cavalier of the streets whistled gently as he walked away in the rain. He walked not because he liked walking, but because he had not the price of a taxi in the world, because the Underground was offensive to his sensitive nerves, and because buses bored him.

III.

IN an obscure, but not unclean, street towards the northern fringe of Soho there is to be found by the seeker after experience a restaurant where gentlemen in Mr. Wagstaffe's predicament may



"Come on, now," said the gruff man, impatiently. "We want you particularly—just to ask you a few questions."

dine very passably, and, on having inscribed the bill with their temporarily worthless signatures, pay on some happier day. Very seldom, indeed, had the cavalier of the streets actually fallen to this pass; these were his most unfortunate days; and not even a bottle of the Rhine wine for which M. Stutz was famous—for such was the name of the polite and amiable *patron* of the Mont Agel Restaurant—was, on this evening, able to uplift him to the sardonic optimism with which he had always parried the most cruel thrusts of a vagabond destiny.

Than the year 1922 there has never been a more dolorous year for gentlemen of enterprise, as instance the luckless experience of certain notorious figures in the world of finance, and though the cavalier of the streets was not only a gentleman of enterprise but also of imagination, even he could not imagine money where money was not. Whereat he was depressed.

But money, though naturally of the first importance in an adventurous life, was not the immediate cause of Mr. Wagstaffe's depression as he dallied with a morsel of caviare and a piece of toast *à la Madeleine*. A face haunted his memory. A lovely face it was, mature and gracious and remote. Ah, from him, how remote! This face (and with it grey eyes, witty and understanding eyes) had happened to him in the course of a most unfortunate episode some months ago. He would never see her again—or, rather, she would never see him. She would look through him, the cavalier of the streets, who had blackmailed her and then repented of his sin because of the beauty of her face and the bravery of her voice. But he would certainly see her, as an outcast in a wilderness may, through the leaves and tree-trunks of his prison, just glimpse a brilliant figure in a noble pageant; for the face that haunted him was of the world, and, in these days of many illustrated journals, had acquired an international reputation as one of the five leading faces of Europe (which, of course, must also include America, for all beautiful Americans live in Europe). Thus and thus it had come to pass that the cavalier of the streets, meshed in a hopeless admiration, nowadays found little pleasure in his way of life; nor did the pursuit and beguiling of "mugs," which had been his source of income and entertainment ever since he had acquired a taste for it at the University of Oxford, any longer divert him. The face of his lady,

ever haunting his memory, deprived him of his wonted pleasure in living dangerously. Whereat he was depressed.

"I must leave England," he thought. "I must go to some foreign city and lead a quite different life. But to leave England requires money; and to lead a quite different life also requires money." He came to a sudden decision; made the gesture of payment upon the bill, and, thanking the courtly M. Stutz, left the restaurant and walked swiftly westwards through the twilight of the streets.

IV.

INDIFFERENT to all about him, the young man strode on his way through the festive crowds that only the most inclement weather can prevent from promenading Oxford Street on a night in June. He saw nothing, he heard nothing; he was in a great hurry; and it was only as his determined steps were brought almost to a standstill by the great concourse of people about Oxford Circus that his eyes found leisure to examine the placards of the evening journals which were exhibited at the mouth of the Tube station. "Countess Divorces Husband." Well, thought he, she couldn't very well divorce her brother, could she? "Famous Diamond Stolen." Ah! "Garden-Party Thief." "£2,000 Ring Stolen at Society Function." "Society Hostess Robbed." It's almost worth it for her, he thought, cattishly, to be called a Society hostess. And he grinned, and assuming a fierce expression, which it was not difficult for him to do under the angle of his dilapidated felt hat, he parted the crowds about him and went his way.

Maybe it was that the placards had had a stimulating effect on him, or maybe it was that he needed violent exercise, but now he walked even more swiftly than before, oblivious of the remarks which his arrogant passage aroused from the leisurely promenaders. He looked neither to the right nor to the left nor behind him; it didn't matter much about his not looking to the right or to the left, but it was a pity he did not look behind him.

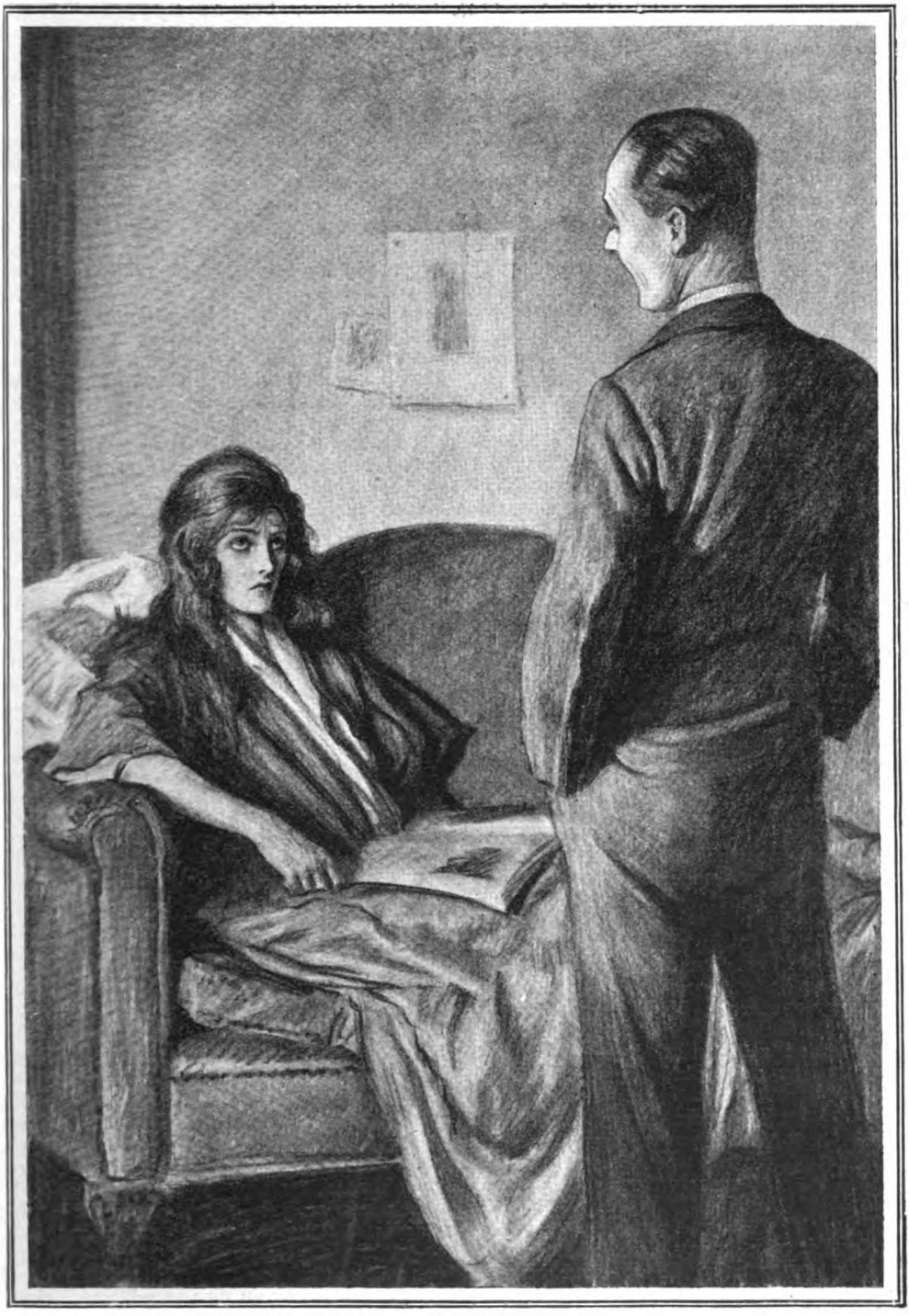
Soon he turned into a quiet street, and from that into another; and came at last to a large building, which, despite the name of Lyonesse Mansions, was a block of flats of the meaner sort. He entered and strode up and up, until the genteel strip of carpet on the stairway gave up all pretence of being a genteel strip of carpet and frankly became a drugget of the consistency of a Gruyère cheese. To the very top of Lyonesse Mansions strode the cavalier of the streets; and when further progress was barred by a mean-looking door he banged upon that door without restraint, once, twice, thrice, and was then opposed by a feminine person who had all the attributes and mannerisms of a slut, but was in reality a respectable woman with a vote, the wife of a chauffeur who lived in a neighbouring mews, and whose comforts she increased by doing a bit of charing here and there. She was doing a bit of it here at the moment, and seemed inclined to resent any interruption on behalf of both herself and her employer, for before he had said a word she had snapped "Out," and only the dexterous shoe of the cavalier of the streets prevented the door from being slammed in his face.

"You'll get a sore throat if you snarl like that," he advised her kindly, and pushed past her into the narrow little hall. Thoughtfully, he looked at the three closed doors with which the narrow little hall was decorated; and, by the abstracted expression of his face, seemed to be in a place far removed from the comments on his manners, appearance, and antecedents, if any, which the charlady, having left the open doorway, poured into his ear.

Then, having thought out his thought, he strode to the middle door and flung it open. The room was dimly lit, which was just as well, for there was in it but one ornament which might have repaid a more exact scrutiny; and that was a girl who, dressed for solitude in a faded blue *peignoir*, her fair hair loose about her shoulders, a copy of a picture paper in her hands, lay negligently on a wretched sofa. She was a pretty girl; that has been remarked before; but then she had been dressed like a flower, a flower from a garden sweeter than the spacious garden of Mrs. Felix Waite, and now she was dressed like nothing at all; and the faded blue of her covering was stained by a flat yellow packet of cigarettes. She was obviously no lady, and had given up pretending she was.

"You dirty beast! How dare you come here?" cried the pretty girl, amazement turning to disgust, disgust to anger. But the cavalier of the streets, still framed in the doorway, his head still covered, only smiled at her. And in his smile there was no hint of apology for the intrusion which his hostess seemed to resent so deeply.

"Good evening, Betty!" said he, in a friendly way. "Just thought I'd come and look at you, you know. 'Pretty Betty' I always did say that looking at you was the king of indoor sports." And he advanced into the room, threw his hat on a chair, dug his hands into his pockets, and grinned at her again; while her eyes, pretty blue eyes hardened by despair, stared up at him in helpless anger.



He dug his hands into his pockets and grinned at her, while her eyes stared up at him in helpless anger. "Michael," she said, bitterly, "why can't you leave me alone?"

"Michael," she said, bitterly, "you are the world's worst man. Why can't you leave me alone? My Gawd, why can't you leave me alone?" And as her voice rose, her eyes swept him in utter contempt.

"You poor kid, I *have* left you alone," he told her gently, wearily. The fact that the cavalier of the streets had at one time been a gentleman was apparent in the way he took abuse. Abuse made him tired. "I haven't been near you for years, Betty, so it's no good your handing me any back-chat about *that*."

His gentleness provoked her. The pretty girl sat up in her disorder, and the expression on her face was not pretty.

HE smiled curiously, thinking of a very young man up at Magdalen College, and of a very pretty girl at a flower-shop near the station, and how the young man had loved the pretty girl from a distance until one day he realized that the pretty girl was very willing to be loved by him; whereupon she had got the sack from the flower-shop, and had come up to London for to be a chorus-girl, and the young man had forgotten her. "Anyway," he added, "I didn't leave you so stranded as that Thomas Felix Waite fellow."

Shame that the blue of the pretty girl's eyes was so hard, so wretched and so hard! "Oh, yes," she sneered, "there ain't much to choose between you two rotten gentlemen!" And she laughed; and then, because she was a girl, she sobbed. "Oh, why've I always been so wretched?"

He was silent, for what seemed a long time. Her sobs spent themselves quietly, in the depths of her self-pity. At last he said, softly: "Anyway, Betty, you've got your own back on the Felix Waite family now. You'll be able to go back to the country, as you've always wanted to, and live comfortably for a time. Or perhaps you'll be able to start a little shop of some kind."

She stared at him in immense amazement; but he was looking out of the little window.

"Michael Wagstaffe," she breathed, "what on earth are you talking about?"

"A diamond ring worth two thousand pounds," said Michael Wagstaffe to the window.

"Balmy!" she jeered at him.

"Hand it over, Betty," said the cavalier of the streets, sharply. He stared down her frightened, incredulous look. "It's no good your saying you haven't got it, because I guessed you had when I saw you leaving the Felix Waite house this evening, and I *know* you have now I've seen your face." She began shrilly, but he snapped her up. "Now, don't be silly, child. It's no good your being selfish with it, because you will never be able to get rid of it on your own, and you'll only get copped if you try. I know about these things. So hand it over, and try not to look as though I was boring you with a tale about potatoes sprouting from the Albert Memorial. We'll go halves on it, I'm telling you. But you'll have to trust me."

She leapt up, faced him, a figure of tense fury. "I trust *you!* You poor, silly cad, I trust *you!* Get away from my sight before——" And she suddenly realized that she had not denied having the diamond ring, that he had provoked her outburst, that he was laughing at her. She threw herself down on the sofa again and fumbled in the yellow packet for a cigarette.

"Clever, aren't you?" she sneered.

"Only by contrast," smiled the cavalier of the streets. "I shall have to find it myself, then?"

She made a move as though to spring from the sofa, but it was only a little move, for she knew her man, and he was standing just beside her. "You're just a blamed fool," was all she said.

"Don't move, Betty," he begged her, gently. "Please don't move. Because I don't want to have to tie you up. All I want to do is to find that diamond ring. It's silly of you to put me to the trouble of having to look for it, but, even so, I shall give you half of whatever I get for it, for which you must thank my late mother for the way she brought me up." He seemed to have fallen into a conversational vein; he heeded not the various and contemptuous noises with which the pretty girl, now, alas, not so pretty as she had been, sought to disturb the even tenor of his conversation; and all the while his eyes were busy about the room, a largish and dingy bed-sitting-room, the bed being inadequately hidden in an alcove behind a frayed green curtain. "You see, Betty dear," he went on, "I have come to a point in my life when I must have money or bust. I am telling you this that you may know I shall not spend half your ill-gotten gains in riotous living. I am tired of riotous living, Betty, I am tired of life, I am tired of England. And so I am going abroad, far abroad, and there I shall make a new start"—she tried frantically to jump up, but he caught her wrist and held it—"make a new start, as I was saying. You will not see me again for a long time, Betty, and when you do you will see a rich and generous man, for I shall never forget that I owe you a good turn for the wrong I did you. But to go abroad and to begin an entirely new life I need money. And so,"

and his eyes still wandered thoughtfully about the room, "I must find your diamond ring, sell it for you, and keep half the proceeds as commission."

"Even if it was here," jeered the pretty girl, "you'd never find it. You think you're the only clever one in the world, don't you?" But there was not much conviction in her voice.

"No; I've always said you had brains, Betty. You are no fool; and I shall conduct my investigations on those premises. But don't move"—and his hand fell sharply on her wrist again, while his eyes still thoughtfully embraced every corner of the room. "Now, if you were a fool, where would you hide a stolen diamond ring so that your maid would not find it? You would hide it in a far corner of a drawer, or under a pile of linen, or you would sew it into the lining of a dress, or bury it in a hole in the floor—in fact, Betty dear, if you were a fool you would hide that diamond ring in some secret place which any charwoman or detective searching this room would find at once. But you are not a fool. Now, if you are a student of Edgar Allan Poe, which I doubt, you will remember his tale about a young Frenchman called Duval, who found a purloined letter, after the Paris police had searched in vain for it for weeks, in the most obvious place in the robber's house: which was, of course, the letter-rack. But what, I ask myself, is the most obvious place in this room in which to hide a stolen diamond ring? The answer at once leaps to my mind, my eyes wander to a dilapidated-looking armchair a few yards away, and fix on a handbag which is lying in the seat thereof. It is a pretty handbag, unpretentious but decorative; and a diamond ring in your handbag would be quite safe from the prying fingers of your maid or charwoman, for the simple reason that she has long ago given up hoping that she will find any money in it. But I am neither your maid nor your charwoman, and—— Oh!" She had bitten the hand that held her wrist, and only by a very quick effort did he restrain her from reaching the armchair on which lay the handbag. "Allow me," he said, politely, nursing his hand. "I will get it for you." Swiftly he got it—and the diamond ring lay in his open palm.

All fight had left the pretty girl; she sat listlessly on the sofa and gave way to her misery.

"Oh, you beast, you beast!" she kept whispering between dry sobs.

THE cavalier of the streets stared at the stone in his hand. It winked and glittered, a bright white light on a dingy palm in a dingy room, arrogantly daring the eye with its innumerable carats. He whistled softly, in wonder. "And they say," he murmured, "that diamonds aren't fashionable nowadays!"

From the diamond in his palm he looked at the bowed head of the girl. He said, harshly:—

"Haven't I told you I'm going to give you half of what I get?"

"I don't want to sell it," sobbed the girl. "I got reasons. You wouldn't understand—*you* wouldn't understand anything to do with sentiment. You was born without a heart, Michael Wagstaffe. When young Thomas Felix Waite loved me he promised me that he'd get that diamond ring from his mother and give it to me. I didn't want it then, nor believe him, but he went on so about it that I came to fix my mind on it. And then one day he left me—just like that, without a word. He was a weak idiot, but I loved him—*you* wouldn't understand. And when he left me my mind somehow ran on that diamond ring he'd promised me—I wanted it, d'you see, as I might want some money that was owing to me. God's treated me pretty rough, I thought, and so He owes me that diamond ring just so as I can look at it now and then. And I been thinking about it months and months, not thinking to steal it, you know, but just wanting it. *You* wouldn't understand how soft a girl gets when she's eaten up with loneliness in a big place like London. Why didn't you let me be at Oxford, Michael, living with my father? And so when I saw this garden-party billed in the Society columns this morning I just thought I'd try to get in and have a look at the diamond on her hand. I never thought she'd be fool enough to take it off in that catch-as-catch-can crowd to show to a friend and then lay it on the edge of the fight-for-a-cup-of-tea-table to grab a cake which she could have done well without, she being already so fat with overfeeding." And for the first time she looked up at the young man, who stood above her absently playing with the glittering toy in his hand. She stared at him with babyish, unbelieving eyes. "Gawd, you're a bad kind of man, Michael Wagstaffe. You're very bad."

"You don't want to sell it, then?" he asked, sardonically.

"I want the diamond—my diamond!" she whispered. "Give me back my diamond ring, Michael Wagstaffe. It'll do for the sun you've took from me since we met at Oxford."

He smiled at her suddenly. "Here you are, pretty Betty," he said, and held out the diamond.

But Betty was afraid; she didn't believe the *beau geste*. Few *beaux gestes* had come

pretty Betty's way. "Don't play with me," she whispered.

"Go on, take the damn thing. I'll swim

jool to show off to his best girl. That's why I've kept you chasing this smart young man all the evening—I knew he had

the Channel." There was no doubt about it now. He had replaced his hat, as though about to depart. She stretched out her hand to his, to the glittering thing in his palm; but her hand never reached the glittering thing. He followed her staring, terrified eyes to the door.

"'Evening, *Mr.* Wagstaffe," said the plain-clothes man with a grin, and he fixed a delighted eye on the glittering thing in the palm of Mr. Wagstaffe's hand. "How's business with diamonds to-night?"

"Rotten," said Mr. Wagstaffe, slowly. "Girl's afraid even to touch it."

The plain-clothes man was delighted with himself; he didn't hurry; he turned to the two constables who filled the doorway behind him. "See, boys! There's not a thief in the world who won't take a stolen

"'Evening, *Mr.* Wagstaffe," said the plain- he fixed a delighted eye on the glittering "How's business with

it, but I wanted to catch him *in flagrante derelicto*, which is Latin for making a fool of himself." He possessed himself of the ring from the young man's hand. "Sorry to have disturbed you, miss. I didn't like doing it, but he was such a long time in here, and he's given us the go-by so often, that I thought I'd come up and fetch him, as he and I are going the same way home to-night. Come on, *Mr.* Wagstaffe."

The pretty girl, who had sat like a numbed

thing, stirred violently; she opened her mouth: "But——"

"I'm glad," said the cavalier, sharply,

"Look here. I too——" began Betty furiously, as they moved to the door.

"Good night, pretty Betty," called the

clothes man with a grin, and
thing in Mr. Wagstaffe's hand.
diamonds to-night?"

"to see that you took my advice about bringing a posse with you. I'm coming."

"But I——" began Betty, incredulously, desperately.

"That's all right, miss," the detective soothed her. "He won't be any more trouble to you for sixteen months or so."

cavalier of the streets. "I'm sorry about the wrong I did you at Oxford. But I'll do you a good turn one day."

Betty rushed frantically towards them, but the detective slammed the door in her face; and through the flimsy panels she heard the gay voice of the cavalier of the streets:—

"Come, gentlemen, remove the body."

STUDY IN MARBLE

by

F. LE GROS CLARK

ILLUSTRATED BY J. DEWAR MILLS

HIS conduct (said the Major) was, after all, merely that of the man who carves his name large upon the Matterhorn; but I never laughed at him. Matterhorn is not a bad similitude. I often think that a cathedral, for those that live in its shadow, assumes piece by piece the qualities of an everlasting hill; it makes hollow and quiet every tone they utter, its jackdaws have a foothold far above their heads, and it is pregnant with echoing caverns and nooks that have confessedly outlived all their ancestors. Look yonder, sir! Do you see it? Follow the line of my cigar, over the peonies—between those two distant poplar trees; that's it—the spire of Dymborough Cathedral. I can see more of it from my attic window.

I met him there several years ago, long before I retired or contemplated settling in these parts. Thousands of the cathedral's visitors must have noticed him—I'll wager that he spoke to no more than one a year; perhaps mine was a fortunate day. I had come into the Cathedral Close—it was a stone-grey afternoon with a brisk wind—and I found myself finally in the Cloisters. At Dymborough, more than any cathedral I know, one seems to stroll upon the dead, to tap at dead men's doors all along the walls; old Bishop A., old Sir Reginald B., old Lord C., they spread unendingly down the cold corridors. I gloomed upon them, sir, with all the melancholy weight of my twenty-nine years; I lounged from epitaph to epitaph.

Suddenly, as I reached a corner, footsteps, and he pattered round it. I thought at once of the jackdaws above us; they and he together—the fauna of the place, you know; both perching and peering on this side and that of it, the familiars of every ledge and alley-way. I guessed at once—a Minor Canon. I was quite right.

"Ha!" he said. "Aha! Studying our monuments, my young friend? What do you make of them?"

"Oh, interesting!" I said. "It's a cold day. Lot of memorials here, haven't you?" He had swimmy, inquisitive blue eyes; I wanted to say something a little—striking, you know; I prodded the stones. "Awful crowd of dead, what? Doesn't seem much good now for any of 'em to have been alive; might as well have carved their epitaphs straight away and departed in peace." I smoothed my moustaches, sir, with some agitation.

"Right," he said, "right. Quite right, my young friend. Yet I've known men who lived—*lived* merely with the fixed ambition to become bishops at fifty. Why, gracious me, I've known men who just aimed at giving their sons a college education. What will remain of such an aim in a hundred years, eh?"

"What, indeed?" I said.

"Aha! but, gracious me, think of all the souls who died about this great cathedral without a token—a sign that they ever breathed. It horrifies me. A cold day—very. Look how blue my fingers are after a minute of this comfortless corner. I like your point of view; I appreciate your point of view, my young friend. Will you have tea with me and—and my little son? I am a widower of some three years. You have touched on a point that absorbs me."

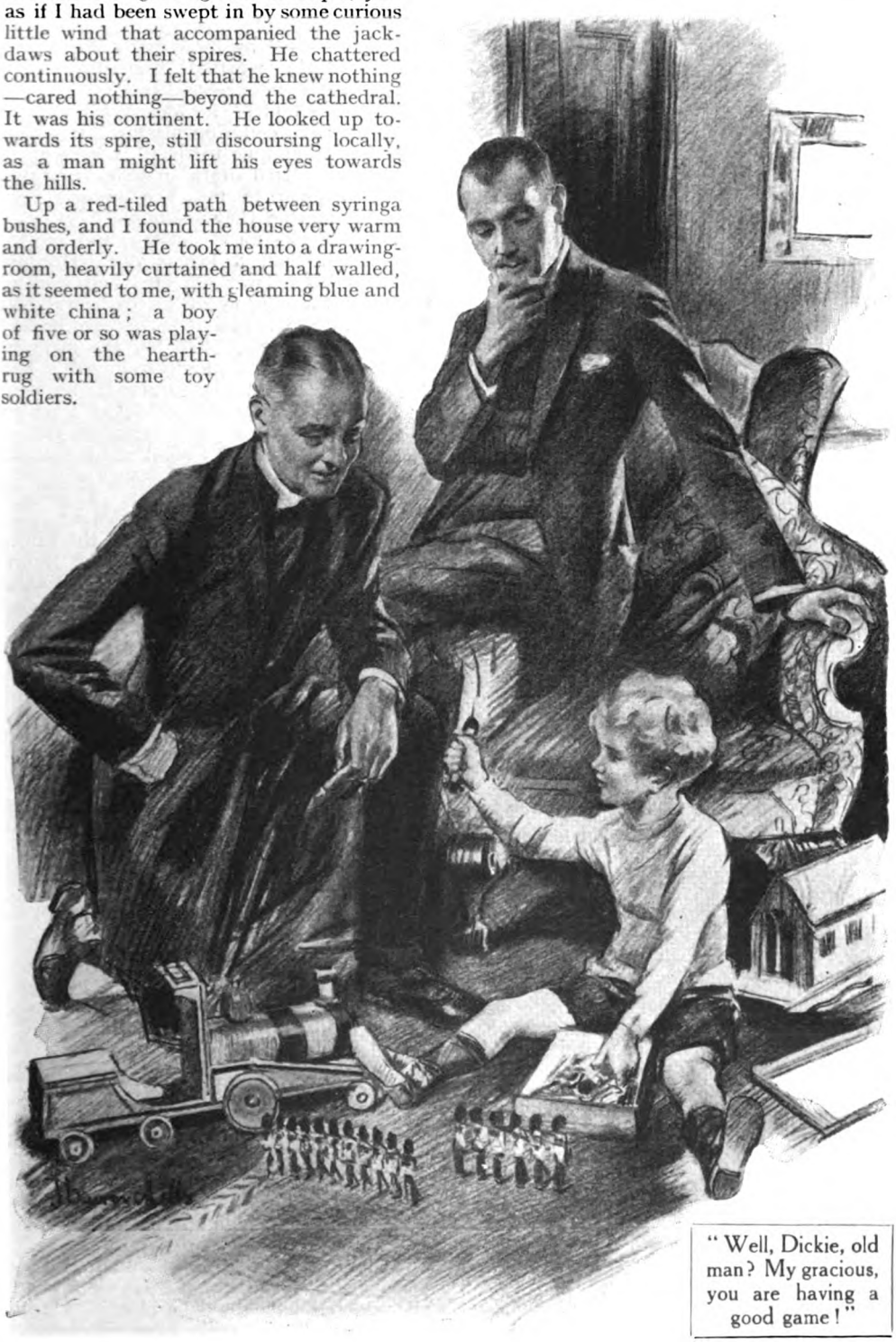
"Very good of you," I said. "Might I ask——?"

"Certainly; Wagstaffe, Canon Wagstaffe. I live in the Close. Ask the vergers and they'll tell you—a rum old bird."

I went with him through a dozen arches

and down long, unlighted transepts, just as if I had been swept in by some curious little wind that accompanied the jackdaws about their spires. He chattered continuously. I felt that he knew nothing—cared nothing—beyond the cathedral. It was his continent. He looked up towards its spire, still discoursing locally, as a man might lift his eyes towards the hills.

Up a red-tiled path between syringa bushes, and I found the house very warm and orderly. He took me into a drawing-room, heavily curtained and half walled, as it seemed to me, with gleaming blue and white china; a boy of five or so was playing on the hearth-rug with some toy soldiers.



"Well, Dickie, old man? My gracious, you are having a good game!"

"That's my son," he whispered, stopping me at the doorway. "Look at his yellow hair—beautiful, isn't it? I'm an oldish man to have—and then have to foster a boy like that: it always strikes me as a bit queer. Often I can hardly appreciate that *this* is a son of mine. Well, Dickie, old man? Well? My gracious, you are having a good game!"

A strange, unreal *ménage*, sir. I stirred my tea and listened to him and watched the boy eating and playing. He had been precise in his analysis; sometimes he would stare at the child for several seconds, as if it were a cat that had scrambled in among his syringas; then he would toss a word to him and immediately—immediately, sir—chatter on about the cathedral and about himself. It dawned upon me that he was a very conceited man.

But later, in a moment he drew together all my loose impressions—the windy resonant Close, the countless memorials, his own hopping, protected personality, and the small boy that so perplexed him. I was moving in worlds novel to me; I was prepared for any revelation that might care to creep out of one of his dark drawers or curtains—and it came, sir, right to time.

He took me into his study. "I write a little," he said, warming his hands, "preach a little—good works. Probably they will make me an Archdeacon. I rather hope they make me an Archdeacon."

'Ah!" I remarked. "You *have* your little ambitions, then, like the rest of your friends? I thought you were above such things, Canon; two handfuls of white dust, you know."

"But I *am* above such things, my young friend," he said, jerking round his head at me. "Yes, yes. But you must admit it looks well on a head-stone, eh? Don't forget the head-stone."

"You mean," I said, "that you have a care—a consideration, shall we say—for the tablet that will be erected to you?"

"Of course," he nodded. "Why, of course. What could be more important? Your remarks when I first met you show me that you see through all the vanity of the common man's ambition; you will understand. Now, just look at this." He began to unlock a heavy drawer. "A man may be excused, I think—a little personal pride—quite logical, you must admit." He edged the drawer open beneath the light.

In the bottom of that drawer, sir, lay a large marble tablet—beautiful green-veined marble—cut into a curiously long ellipse and engraved with great elaboration. I bent to decipher the words. They ran somewhat as follows: "In Memory of James Wagstaffe. Born May the something-or-other, 1840, Died ——," and there came a blank. "Author of 'The History of Dymborough,' 'The Church under the Tudors,' ——" again a blank for future works. "He married Henrietta, third daughter of someone-or-other."

"A noble tablet," he was saying. "The best, the most enduring marble. I have it added to from time to time. I keep up to date a completed draft, in case—anything should happen to me, you know. Very enduring marble, they assure me."

You see, sir—an eccentric: and yet, as he himself said, a logical one. He had watched his fellows, old men and women, dying in the shadow of his cathedral and passing into utter oblivion; perhaps he had buried many himself and felt the memory of them fading from month to month. But the tablets, they at least survived. Suppose—he must have thought—suppose I set all my ambitions upon a fine memorial tablet, who can blame me? I admired his marble, startled at the strange arrogance and self-contentment of this little man. It seemed to me by turns pitiable and disgusting; and yet I did not laugh. He flicked the tablet with his silk handkerchief and looked down at it for a moment. I had an impressing view of that oval with its green veins running distinguishably across it—and then as gentle as a miser he slid home the drawer. As he showed me finally from the house, I heard the child crying plaintively from an upper room; I do not think the old man noticed it. He waved to one or two black-coated passers-by and rubbed alternately his red knuckles; the cathedral, dark and immense, stood waiting for the night.

"Well," I said, "good-bye, good-bye. You have been very kind."

"By no means. You are an understanding soul. Come again to see me and my tablet."

"And Dickie?" I ventured.

"Eh? Yes, of course, Dickie. Mind you——" He fingered the sleeve of my overcoat. "I want to do right by the boy: I want him to have the best I can afford; but it is difficult for me to realize him—abundantly difficult."

I made no answer. Even then he did not seem to hear the youngster's wail.

I WAS many years older, sir, before I came again to Dymborough; and yet, the moment I entered the Close—that same sheltered coolness of the atmosphere, the same bird-voices high up about the spire. Nothing had changed, except my store of memories and beliefs. "Shall I call on Wagstaffe?" I thought. He will have altered—but how could he alter? A trifle greyer, perhaps, still more thoroughly

absorbed into his quiet cathedral. "I will call," I said, and walked slowly round the Close, visioning his red tiles, his syringa bushes, his marble tablet. "Yes," I said, "I will call upon him."

But, sir, as I turned the corner and came within sight of his house, I was stopped dead, guessing and yet knowing that I need not guess. There was a black crowd about his little gate—a marshalling—a subdued rustle. A great bell began to toll; the mass appeared to trickle forward.

I found a gardener scything the lawns and asked him. "Yes," he told me, "the name was Wagstaffe—old Mr. Wagstaffe"; and I slunk away from the Cloisters, deeply, almost senselessly, disappointed with life. I found myself longing to have seen again that small conceited man; a jackdaw flew down upon a gargoyle and sat eyeing me, till I felt his mockery of me and shook my cane at him.

The endless memorials reminded me of the old man's tablet. If I had only arrived a month or two later, it might have been set in position. That would have been better, sir; it was this grim interval between the living man and his marble monument that seemed to me so terrible. I was deciding to fly the place, when a whiteness flashed in the faint sun from down the musty avenue, and I found a surpliced cleric advancing upon me. He was young, with streaky pale hair and sharp eyes; he wore a black stole, and it occurred to me that he might have been at the funeral.

"Pardon me," I said, "but a death has recently—— An old acquaintance of mine, I fear, Canon Wagstaffe?"

"Archdeacon now," he intimated. "Poor old Wagstaffe. Yes, I have just been taking his funeral." I turned beside him and we paced on slowly together.

"Of what did he die?" I asked.

"Well," he coughed, "he has not been frequently in public of late—no. But I think, some of us think, he died of a broken heart."

I was staggered. Curiously enough, the vision I had was of that marble tablet broken right across the centre; but I pulled myself together. "A broken heart?" I said. "I should have believed that would be the last thing for him to die of. He seemed to me an excellent man, but—self-centred."

"So we thought," said the cleric. "So we thought. And yet I have sometimes felt that he cared more than he himself knew."

"Cared?" I said. "Cared for what?"

"Why," he lifted his thin eyebrows, "for the boy, you know. He was killed on the Indian frontier three months ago."

"Dickie? Good heavens!" For a moment my brain refused to see that yellow-haired boy as playing at real warfare—lying dead. "Dickie? Well, well. You really think he cared? He never seemed to realize the boy's existence."

"So we thought," said the cleric. "So *he* thought, perhaps. The heart can deceive itself strangely. He never spoke of his son as other fathers do, and yet death, you see, has been a great revealer."

WE reached the archway in silence. "There was a tablet," I said, abruptly. "A fine marble tablet—he kept it inscribed with his name and his achievements. Now, I suppose, it will be set in position somewhere?"

He looked at me attentively. "I have heard of such a tablet," he nodded; "I recall hearing of it some five years ago. A strange notion, was it not? But I have heard nothing about it to-day. I fancy it must be a libel on him."

"But I saw it," I said; "I could recognize it again; the veining of the marble even——"

"Really?" he murmured. "Very curious. Is it possible, I wonder? Just come with me a moment."

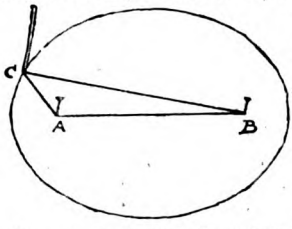
"Where?" I asked; but he made no reply. He led me through the cathedral to a distant chapel and paused at last before a spot upon its wall.

There was set a marble tablet, the size and shape of the old man's memorial—the same marble, I will swear to it, but reversed, sir, back to front. I knew it by the slanting of its green veins. Upon it were engraved the words: "Richard Wagstaffe, D.S.O., killed June 23rd, 1912. Aged 27 years."

PERPLEXITIES. By Henry E. Dudeney.

649.—DRAWING AN OVAL.

I SUPPOSE a large proportion of my readers are familiar with this trick for drawing an oval. It is very useful if you have to cut a mount for a portrait or to make an oval flower-bed. You drive in two pins or nails (or, in the case of the flower-bed, two stakes) and enclose them with an endless band of thread or string, as shown in our diagram, where the pins are at A and B, and the pencil point, at C, stretches the loop of thread. If you keep the thread taut and pass the pencil all round until you come back to the starting point you will describe the perfect oval shown.



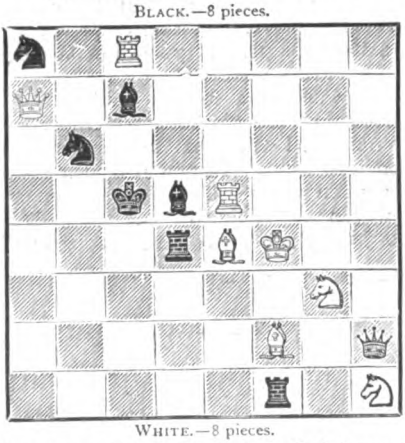
But I have recently heard the complaint that the method is too haphazard: that it was only by a lot of trials that you can draw an oval of the exact dimensions required. This is a delusion, and it will make an interesting little puzzle to show at what distance apart the pins should be placed, and what length the string should be, to draw an oval, say, twelve inches in length by eight inches in breadth. Can you discover the very simple rule for doing this?

650.—CRICKET SCORES.

IN a country match Great Muddleton, who went in first, made a score of which they were proud. Then Little Wurzleford had their innings and scored a quarter less. The Muddletonians in their next attempt made a quarter less than their opponents, who, curiously enough, were only rewarded on their second effort by a quarter less than the last score. Thus, every innings was a quarter less fruitful in runs than the one that preceded it. Yet the Muddletonians won the match by 50 runs. Can you give the exact score for every one of the four innings?

651.—BLOCK AND PIN PUZZLE.

BLACK.—8 pieces.



WHITE.—8 pieces.

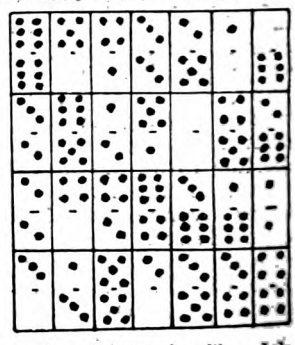
Only 6 pieces (2 Kings, 2 Queens, and 2 Rooks) can move.

READERS may remember our puzzle, No. 313 (Aug.-Sept., 1916), in which we proposed to place the whole thirty-two pieces on the chessboard (in a possible position) so that not a single one of them could move or make a capture. My own best attempt left only three possible moves, and though many attempts have been made to beat this result, nobody has yet succeeded. Probably a perfect solution is impossible. Mr. W. E. Lester has suggested to me this companion problem: to place the sixteen pieces (discarding all the pawns) so that as few pieces as possible can move. He says, "I do not think it is possible with fewer than six pieces able to move," and the diagram shows his own solution. Only the two Kings, the two Queens, and two of the Rooks can move, the Knights in the corners being blocked and eight other pieces pinned.

Unfortunately this ingenious arrangement is *not* the best possible, for I find that fewer than six pieces can be managed. Can the reader place the sixteen pieces so that fewer than six are able to move? It is, of course, not allowed to put the two Bishops of Black or White both on squares of the same colour.

Solutions to Last Month's Puzzles.

645.—THE DOMINO RECTANGLE.



THE illustration shows how the twenty-eight dominoes may be arranged so that the columns add up 24 and the rows 21.

646.—PALINDROMIC SQUARE NUMBERS.

THE square of 836 is 698896, which contains an even number of digits and reads backwards and forwards alike. I do not know of any smaller square number containing an even number of figures that is a palindrome.

647.—MORE EXPANDING WORDS.

THE missing words in their order are, I, IT, TIE, DIET, TIRED, DIRECT, CORDITE, DOCTRINE, REDUCTION, INTRODUCES, DESTRUCTION.

648.—THE PUZZLE OF THE RUNNERS.

WHILE Brown has only run $\frac{1}{8}$ or $\frac{4}{32}$ of the course, Tompkins has run the remainder $\frac{7}{8}$, less $\frac{1}{4}$, or $\frac{11}{32}$. Therefore Tompkins's pace is $\frac{21}{4}$ times that of Brown. Brown has now $\frac{7}{8}$ of the course to run, whereas Tompkins has only $\frac{1}{4}$. Therefore Brown must go five times as fast as Tompkins, or increase his own speed to five times $\frac{21}{4}$, that is $\frac{105}{4}$ times as fast as he went at first. But the question was not how many times as fast, but "how much faster," and $\frac{105}{4}$ times as fast is equal to $\frac{81}{4}$ times faster than Brown's original speed. The correct answer is therefore $20\frac{1}{4}$ times faster.

641.—A COMPLETE SKELETON.

FOUR asterisks were unfortunately given in the divisor instead of three, and the error had not been detected when the solution went to press. Many correspondents saw clearly what was wrong from the working indicated

HEL M. DELL P.G. WODEHOUSE
LLIPS OPPENHEIM W.B. MAXWELL

JUN 4 '98

THE STRAND MAGAZINE

THE SECRET OF LONG DRIVING

BY

CYRIL J.H. TOLLEY

You who complain of your Nerves —— do you suffer like these?

BALZAC, the French Novelist, wrote: "I feel a horrible lassitude. I have no longer force or courage. My brain is exhausted. I am incapable of fixing my thought—of compelling it to consider a subject under all aspects and deciding the line of march."

TCHAIKOVSKY, the Russian Composer, wrote: "My brain is empty, my nerves altogether shaken. I have not the least pleasure in working, and begin to be afraid lest I am played out. I sleep badly, suffer from terrible headaches, and am depressed to the verge of despair."

GEORGE ELIOT, the eminent Novelist, wrote: "My life is a perpetual nightmare, haunted by something to be done which I have never the energy to do. I am suffering from extreme languor and fatigue. My brain wants lashing to work like a negro. I got into a state of so much wretchedness in attempting to concentrate my thoughts that I became desperate. I have a distrust in myself, in my work — a despair of ever being equal to the demands of life."

IN these three confessions you have a true and vivid picture of the misery produced by extreme nervous exhaustion — a state far more common since the War than ever it was in the past. Observe that — barring headache, poor sleep, and physical tiredness — the symptoms are chiefly mental.

It is that difficulty in concentrating your mind— that feeling of having to force yourself to work— that loss of self-confidence — that vague depression and anxiety — which are the surest signs of weakened nerve-force. Don't let these symptoms grow worse, but dispel them by taking Sanatogen.

Help your Nerves with SANATOGEN — the True Tonic Food

In a short time you will be on the high road to recovery, absorbing new strength every day, and once more beginning to enjoy life. Consider, for example, the confession of a modern novelist, Mr. Horace Hazeltine, who eloquently describes the effect of Sanatogen on himself after a severe attack of nervous depression:—

> **"One after another the symptoms that I so dreaded drew farther and farther away, and those months of gradual, steady improvement, without a single setback, were a constantly increasing joy in themselves . . . I no longer know either irritability or temper. Restlessness and fickle attention have fled me. I sleep long and refreshingly, and wake each morning to the fresh joy of living. Yet better than all else is my restored delight in work Never, so long as I can remember, have I approached the day's labour with such zeal, with such enthusiasm!"**

You, who complain of your nerves, buy Sanatogen today and take it regularly. Your chemist sells it — from 2/3 per tin — but be sure you get the genuine product, manufactured solely by Genatosan Ltd., Loughborough.

SANATOGEN

THE
STRAND
MAGAZINE
June, 1923.

HE CLASPED MOYRA TO HIS BREAST, AND WENT ACROSS JERMYN STREET AS IT MAY BE SUPPOSED NO OTHER MAN HAS OR EVER WILL EFFECT A CROSSING.

(See page 553.)

SHADOW AND SUBSTANCE

by

ROLAND PERTWEE

ILLUSTRATED BY W. SMITHSON BROADHEAD

THE Southampton-Waterloo train stopped for a moment at the little station to collect Barton Grover and his belongings. A few school children cheered shrilly as the train pulled out. Settling back on the cushions of his empty compartment Barton Grover reflected that such cheering was silly. He reminded himself, however, that they were simple country folk and should not be too heavily blamed for small enthusiasms. But it was strange they should have known of his whereabouts, for he had been at pains in no way to advertise his arrival. When the little steamer which had brought him from the West Coast of Africa made port the night before he had stepped ashore unobtrusively, climbed into a waiting car, and driven off to spend the night at his cottage and exchange his tropical kit for clothing more appropriate to London requirements. His dress clothes and the two lounge suits which he packed smelt abominably of moth balls after two years of disuse. A firm of stevedores had been instructed to collect and deliver the crates of trophies which were still aboard the steamer. He did not want to be bothered with such concerns, his every thought being centred upon meeting Moyra with the least possible delay.

Adorable, impressionable, and romantic Moyra! It was marvellous to reflect that they were still engaged—that her love had survived interminable years of separation. For months on end he had been too remote from civilization to give her the least indication of his whereabouts. Throughout that endless period when he and half a hundred bearers fought their way through the mid-African jungle, scaled impossible heights, and bridged appalling chasms, she must have given him up for lost. Tongue would never tell nor could pen write the full detail of that terrific, that epic adventure which culminated in the discovery and the bringing to the coast of the mythical Gold Stool of Isthwala. Barton Grover was far too modest to describe the achievement, and since neither camera-man nor historian had accompanied him, the secrets were locked in his own breast. Rumours of the affair naturally leaked out and found their way into the papers—the swimming of the crocodile river, for instance, and the gulf which he attempted to cross on a felled sapling that broke in the centre when he was half-way over and left him dangling above a drop of two thousand feet. Enough had gone to press to prove of her sons England certainly boasted a man to whom courage and fearlessness was a second nature.

This, then, was the man who was returning to his sweetheart after two years' absence. Adorable Moyra! He had won her heart in face of fearful odds. She was nineteen when he asked her to be his, and even with the knowledge that beneath her pillow on alternate nights reposed the likenesses of Owen Nares and Godfrey Tearle—two gentlemen with whom otherwise she was unacquainted—he sailed in boldly and demanded her hand. And she, forsaking the shadow for the substance, fell into his arms and wept for gladness' sake.

All too slowly the train bore him Londonward, and to speed the leaden-footed moments he shook out the pages of a newspaper and glanced through them. In thrilling headlines he read:—

RAY DUKE ARRIVES.
THE HERO OF 100 SCREEN PLAYS IN ENGLAND.

Then in paragraph:—

"Our special correspondent was first to meet the arch-athlete of the films. . . . A

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face wreathed in smiles . . . a handshake like the hug of a bear . . . I asked Ray Duke for his first impression of England, and his reply bore the characteristic stamp of a sub-title. 'Bully,' he said. Ray Duke did not wait for the gangway to be lowered, but went over the liner's side and slid down the hawser like a monkey . . ."

There was a great deal more, but Barton Grover opened the paper at the middle sheet to see what the leading article had to say about the new Government.

"*Probably,*" *it said,* "*there is no better method of inspiring confidence between the two great English-speaking races than by extending the hand of welcome to such men as Mr. Ray Duke——*"

Barton was getting a little tired of it, and he turned yet another page. Beyond a twelve by eight photograph of the celebrated Film Star—a photograph which, by an odd coincidence, bore a strong resemblance to Barton himself—there were no further comments upon this remarkable personality. The page otherwise contained a few advertisements—a warning to subscribers to insure that very day—and in minute print somewhere near the foot of the last column the small announcement :—

"*Barten Grover* (*misspelt*), *the explorer, landed at Southampton last night from the steamship 'Ivanhoe,' and is expected in London to-day.*"

It has already been suggested that he was a modest man, yet, absurd as it may seem, he could not entirely conquer a slight feeling of irritation. He threw the crumpled paper aside, lit a pipe, and folded his arms. A moment later he was laughing at himself and turning happy thoughts toward his meeting with Moyra.

THE outer fringe of London houses, grey and squalid, flicked into view and Barton Grover rose to his feet. He felt in his pocket to be sure his ticket had not disappeared, humped his Gladstone bag off the rack, and tightened the strap of his overcoat. The train began to slacken speed, and a glance out of the window revealed the outline of Waterloo Station, from the iron girders of which hung a variety of flags and bunting and a huge streamer which fluttered the word "Welcome." It puzzled him. As they slid alongside the platform there rose a roar like unto the roar of a cataract. It was the cheering of many people. Barton was puzzled by that too. Down the whole length of the platform a rope barrier had been erected, supported by wooden uprights and half the police force of London. Behind the barrier fought and struggled a dense crowd of yelling men and women. The train came to a standstill and a porter flung open the door.

"I say," demanded Barton Grover, "what the devil is all this ?"

"Why, to give 'im a welcome, of course."

"Give who a welcome ?"

"The bloke wot done all them marvellous things—hangin' on by 'is eyelids and Gawd knows wot else."

Barton Grover fell back on his seat and gasped.

"I say," he exclaimed, "but this is too damned silly. Good Lord, I can't face that. I'm a quiet man. I don't want all this hullabaloo."

"You don't want it ?"

"Well, I suppose I'm the chap they're looking for."

"Wot, Ray Duke ?" gasped the porter.

A flash of blinding shame smote Barton Grover across the face and turned it scarlet. Seizing his bag he flung open the off-side door of the compartment and dropped to the line. As he approached the engine he saw an athletic figure which bore a strong resemblance to his own swing up to the top of the cab, armed with a lump of coal in either hand.

"Say, boys," shouted Ray Duke to the grinning driver and stoker below him, "keep that bunch at bay. I'm gonna hit it."

He sprang to the coal in the tender, scrambled across it, hauled himself up to the top of the first carriage, and bolted down the length of the train to an accompaniment of cheering such as only a Football Cup Final or an armistice might hope to inspire.

Barton Grover and his Gladstone bag entered a taxi and drove away without exciting attention. And all the streets from Waterloo to the Hotel Colossal were lined with expectant crowds.

To those unacquainted with the West-end of London a description of that mighty new luxury hotel, the Colossal, would not be out of place. The Colossal is on the south side of Piccadilly, with an entrance almost facing Burlington House, and another in the narrow thoroughfare of Jermyn Street. The architecture is in imitation of the Tudor style, a great feature being made of oak beams and external timbering. Ambition on the part of the directors to supply ample accommodation for their patrons robbed the building of every resemblance to the period aimed at. Height was not a feature of Tudor construction, yet the Hotel Colossal boasted eleven storeys, each storey projecting a foot or two beyond the one below. The critic of *The Architectural Times* likened

this "epitome of contradictions" to a flight of steps upside down. In the centre was a courtyard of a size adequate for the turning round of a coach and four, but since the exigencies of modern travel render this proceeding of rare occurrence, the studded doors in Piccadilly and Jermyn Street were kept permanently barred and the space was used as a kind of outdoor dining hall.

When Barton Grover announced the date of his return Moyra insisted that her mother should bring her to town and book rooms for the three of them at the Colossal, and since Moyra generally had her way, she had it also on this occasion. A message of love, joy, and address was wirelessed and the Golden Hour was at hand.

Arrived at the corner of Jermyn Street, Barton Grover's taxi was held up by a cordon of mounted police officered by an inspector.

"But look here," he protested, "I want to get to the Colossal—I've rooms there."

The inspector shook his head.

"You'd better try the Piccadilly entrance, sir. We're holding this route for Ray Duke."

"The devil you are," said Barton, and pulled in his head savagely.

One or two members of the crowd heard him, and as the taxi drew away he was favoured with a hostile snarl.

At the Piccadilly entrance things were almost as bad. It took him twenty minutes to fight his way through the scrum, and he was an angry man when at last he made the swing doors. Here a massive commissionaire barred his way.

"Reporter?" he demanded.

"Reporter be damned," said Barton, and gave his name.

The commissionaire looked doubtful and dispatched a page boy to the Reception Bureau.

"I don't know the name," he said, "but I'll make sure."

After some further delay Barton Grover was admitted and conveyed in a lift to his apartment on the first floor above the mezzanine. Mrs. Sorell and Moyra being out, he decided to unpack and effect a change. He had, however, barely loosened the strap of his bag when a tumult in the street below brought him to the window in time to witness the spectacular arrival of Ray Duke. The police cordon had been broken and the narrow street was densely packed with excited people. A huge limousine was drawing up at the door, upon the roof of which stood Ray Duke, like a triumphal statue on an arch. As the car came to a halt he took a flying leap over the heads of the crowd, caught the framework of the arc light which projected from the hotel entrance, and dropped neatly on the rubber mat. Then with a wave of the hand he was gone.

"H'm!" growled Barton, and proceeded with his unpacking.

HE was not, however, to be left long in peace. Following a commotion in the passage outside his room came a knock. The door opened and one of the hotel managers bowed himself in, leaving the door ajar.

"Ah, I perceive monsieur has not yet unpacked."

"Well, what of it?" demanded Barton.

"It appears that Monsieur Ray Duke is requiring another apartment, and it would be very convenient if monsieur——"

Barton Grover saw what was coming.

"I'll see him damned before I'll shift,' said he.

The manager began a polite expostulation, which was cut short by a singularly sweet and singularly authoritative voice outside.

"Say, please, I'll inconvenience no one."

The big smiling face and broad shoulders of Ray Duke appeared for a second in the doorway.

"Sorry," said Barton Grover.

"Don't name it; he shouldn't have asked." And with a smile and a nod he entered a room on the right.

From the street below came a growing roar of "Ray Duke, Ray Duke, Ray—Ray—Ray Duke," which burst into a tumult as the hero of the hour stepped out on the iron balcony (iron balconies are a feature of modern Tudor construction) and performed a short-arm balance on the rail.

Barton Grover abandoned the intention to unpack and stalked downstairs to the main lounge, arriving simultaneously with the coming in of Moyra and her mother.

"Barton!" she cried, and kissed him ecstatically before the scandalized gaze of everyone present. "Oh, how lovely that it's really you! We went to the station and, of course, couldn't get anywhere near the barrier; but mother and I stood on a seat and saw him run down the top of the train. It was gorgeous."

A slight sense of chill stole through Barton's veins. To conceal it he shook hands warmly with Mrs. Sorell and congratulated her on looking so well. As a matter of fact the good lady, as a result of much congestion, had the appearance of having been pulled through a hedge backwards.

"Can't we go upstairs and have tea in your private sitting-room?" he suggested.

"Oh, that would never do," trilled Moyra. "We've booked a table between the stairs and the lift, so if he *does* come down we shall

be able to see him near to. Oh, Barton, weren't you thrilled at being on the same train ? "

" Yes, rather," he replied, untruthfully.

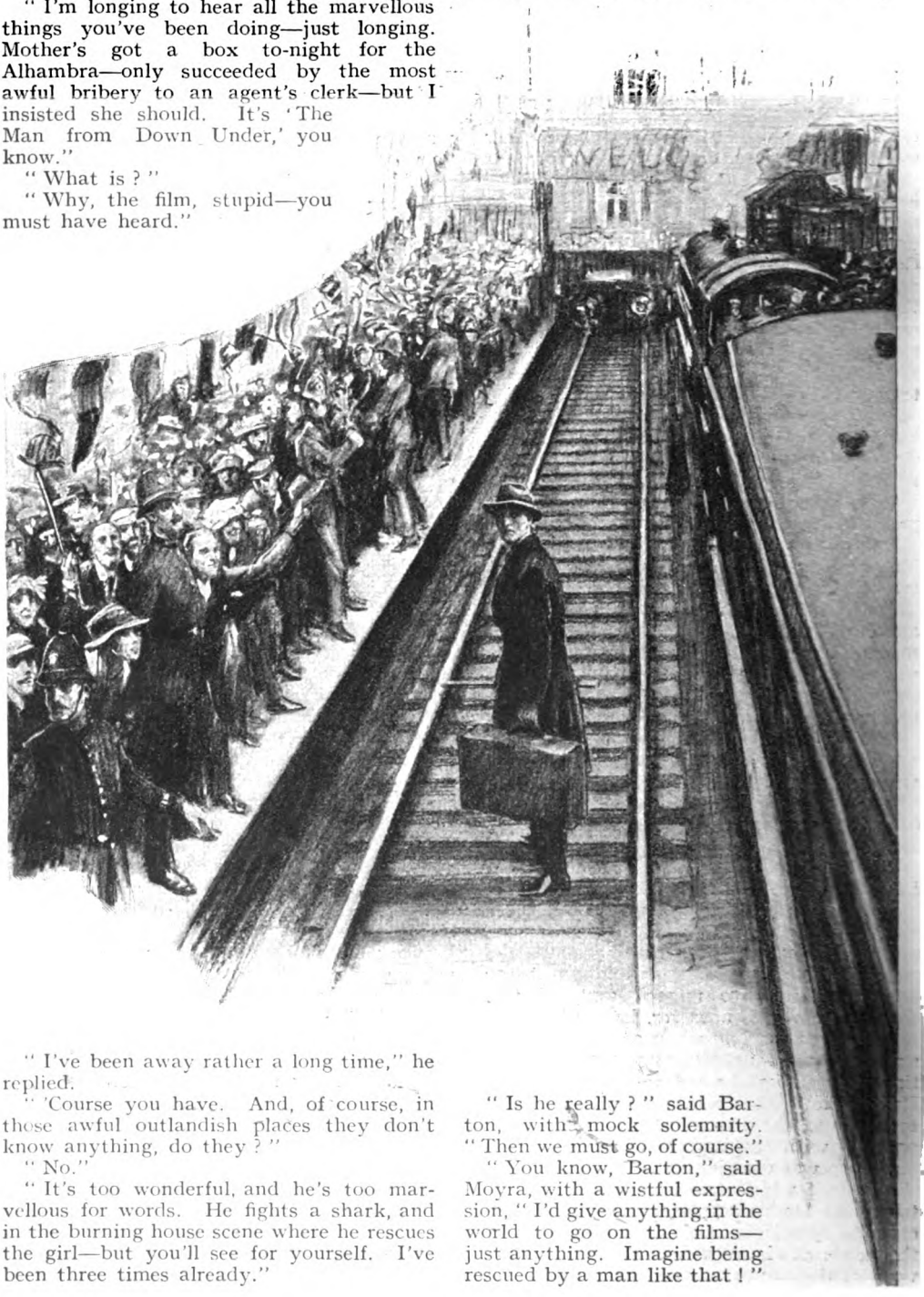
" I'm longing to hear all the marvellous things you've been doing—just longing. Mother's got a box to-night for the Alhambra—only succeeded by the most awful bribery to an agent's clerk—but I insisted she should. It's 'The Man from Down Under,' you know."

" What is ? "

" Why, the film, stupid—you must have heard."

" Then don't let's go," suggested Barton, cheerfully.

" Not go ? Why, you great silly, you're joking. He's going to be there himself."



" I've been away rather a long time," he replied.

" 'Course you have. And, of course, in those awful outlandish places they don't know anything, do they ? "

" No."

" It's too wonderful, and he's too marvellous for words. He fights a shark, and in the burning house scene where he rescues the girl—but you'll see for yourself. I've been three times already."

" Is he really ? " said Barton, with mock solemnity. " Then we must go, of course."

" You know, Barton," said Moyra, with a wistful expression, " I'd give anything in the world to go on the films—just anything. Imagine being rescued by a man like that ! "

Barton imagined awhile in silence—a silence from which he was saved by a page boy shouting the number of his room.

"Yes?" he demanded.

A card was presented. "Felton Sharp, Amalgamated International Press Bureau, Fleet Street."

"Asking for an interview," said the boy.

Barton twisted the card dubiously. In ordinary circumstances he would have refused, but somehow he could not avoid a slight sense of gratification. He handed the card to Moyra.

"Shall I?"

"Of course."

"Ask him to come along."

The boy retired and returned with a short, ferrety-eyed little man who nodded and smiled

Ray Duke, armed with a lump of coal in either hand, bolted down the length of the train to an accompaniment of cheering such as only a Football Cup Final might hope to inspire.

"Mr. Barton Grover, sir?"

"Yes."

"The explorer, I believe?"

"That's so."

"Good. Mr. Grover, you are in a position to render me a considerable service."

"Aha!"

"If you would grant my agency the exclusive rights of your experiences during the next few days——"

"I'm not much of a hand at the writing business."

"We should be pleased to offer any sum you——"

"There's no question of that."

"We should be charmed. You see, sir, you are in a position to supply almost unique information——"

"Well, I suppose I have seen a few queer things, one way and another——"

"Precisely. Your room, I have ascertained, immediately adjoins Mr. Ray Duke's, and——"

Barton Grover struggled to his feet.

"Look here," he exploded. "What are you driving at, Mr.—er—Felton?"

"Just a few breezy impressions. 'I met Ray Duke on his way to the bathroom this morning and exchanged a greeting.'"

Barton Grover called a waiter.

"Show this gentleman out," said he, "and if he won't walk out, kick him out."

"Barton," said Moyra, reproachfully, "I think you were rather horrid."

"Sorry, my dear," he replied, "but—oh, well!"

There was an awkward silence before they spoke again.

"Is your room *really* next to his?" asked Moyra.

DURING the ten minutes' interval following the first three reels of "The Man from Down Under"—reels surcharged with excitement and perils of a terrific kind—Barton Grover did, for him, an astonishing thing. Without invitation he proceeded to offer his own version of the sapling-cum-chasm episode, and closely followed up the success achieved with an account of his swim across the crocodile river. To those who will blame him must be offered in excuse his love for Moyra. Lovers all the world over must seek means of bringing brightness into the eyes of their adored.

Moyra's remark at the conclusion of this hair-raising narrative was a little chastening to his *amour propre*, but doubtless she spoke without the will to wound.

"You wait till you see him fight the shark!"

Certain forces are too powerful for the strength of man to conquer. Admiration is one of them.

Barton Grover retreated into the shadows of the box.

The second half of the film was of so tremendously stirring a nature and revealed Ray Duke in so many moods of courage, resource, and daring that even Barton was spellbound. There could be no denying that on face value the man was superlatively plucky. A sudden realization swept into Barton's brain that, to a great extent, the shadow is more effective than the substance, the relation than the deed. Had his swim across the crocodile river been screened it is reasonable to suppose it would have represented little else than a gentleman enjoying a bathe—whereas Ray Duke's encounter with the shark, thanks to excellent submarine photography, appeared as the most supreme adventure a man could undertake.

Barton Grover piloted his little party back to the hotel in an injured and troubled frame of mind—across which ran a streak of genuine, if rather unwilling, admiration.

Moyra was too fatigued by the excitements of the day to respond to his invitation to supper. Wherefore, after a solitary drink he ascended the lift to his room and sat gloomily on the bed. Just before they parted for the night Moyra had said:—

"Oh, darling, wouldn't it be wonderful if you did things like he does?"

"I suppose it would," he answered.

"Oh, I know you've done wonderful things too, but such a long way off. It isn't quite the same, is it?"

"'Course it isn't," he replied, simply. "Good night, my dear."

"Good night," she said. "I love you very much."

Wherefore he sat gloomily on the bed and was sorry for many reasons that he was a modest man.

Poor little Moyra, she was not greatly to be blamed. Her romantic heart had but added its palpitation to the great surge of enthusiasm that was sweeping the country.

He crossed to the window, opened it, and stepped on the balcony. In the street below a few of the faithful still lingered. As the man appeared who had walked half across a continent in face of the most appalling hardships and dangers, a wild cheer arose. From the roof opposite a searchlight, representing the enterprise of a pushful daily, blazed up and lit him from head to foot. Barton Grover stepped back into the room again with an angry gesture. To his astonishment Ray Duke was in the doorway.

"Your door was open," he said. "I couldn't help seeing what happened."

"Oh, that's all right."

"You didn't like it, Mr. Grover?"

"Not a lot."

Ray Duke nodded.

" It's the dam-silliest thing in the world," he said, " but the man doesn't exist who's big enough to stop it."

" Do you want to stop it ? "

" Ask yourself," came the reply. " I don't say it isn't great advertising, but for

" More or less."

" Gee ! " exclaimed the lion of movies. ' It'd be worth boasting to have shaken hands with you, Mr. Grover."

Barton shot a quick glance at the speaker. He had been stung too many times that day

" Look here," Barton exploded. " What are you driving at, Mr.—er—Felton ? "

pleasure——" He left the sentence conclusively unfinished and started a new one. " Ever since I took a glance at the hotel register, your name has been worrying me, sir. You're not *the* Barton Grover by any chance ? "

" What ? Oh, yes ; I don't know another —suppose so."

" Explorer ? "

to be unwary. Ray Duke's face was a picture of sincerity.

" You're joking," he began.

" No, sir. It means a lot to meet a man who's handled the real goods." He flicked a couple of cheroots from his vest pocket, offered one to Barton and lit the other himself. " I've always heard you pioneer boys keep pretty dark on what's happened,

but "—his expression became wistful—"well, if you would talk I can respect a confidence."

Barton laughed nervously. He had a genuine terror of admiration.

"You needn't be afraid I'd make capital out of it either."

"But, good heavens, compared with your daily exercise——"

"Oh, shush! Film stuff! What's that, anyway?"

"To judge by what I saw to-night——"

"Must have seemed muck to you."

"I wouldn't care to tackle it. The way you dropped from that 'plane to the express——"

"Both moving at the same speed. Easy as stepping off a chair."

"That scrap with the shark, then."

Ray Duke blushed and nodded.

"I'll allow it's a great effect," he said.

A silence fell between them. After a while:—

"Y'know, I puzzle sometimes how I'd figure in a real adventure. Guess I haven't the right kind of nerve to face the solid thing. One gets soft." He sighed.

Barton Grover mixed two whiskies and soda.

"There must be a mighty fine story in the gold stool business."

"It was hard work, but I don't know about a story."

Ray Duke smiled.

"Life's a matter of how one sees things. I guess yours is a succession of deeds and mine of records. It's all according." He swallowed his drink at a gulp. "That stuff is fine. Good night, Mr. Grover; this has been a real pleasure."

They shook hands. At the door he turned.

"You wouldn't eat luncheon with me to-morrow?"

"I've my *fiancée* and her mother here."

"The four of us."

Barton hesitated. He knew by refusing he would deny Moyra the greatest sensation of her life. He feared by accepting he would expose himself to a charge of tuft-hunting. The nation would expect Ray Duke to feed in public, a proceeding accompanied by unwelcome notoriety. With lightning intuition Ray Duke read his companion's thought.

"I've a private room," he said, "and one or two boys guaranteed to hold the doors against the newspaper gang."

"I'm sure we'd love to," said Barton.

"Say one o'clock?"

"Right, one."

A moment later a roar from below betokened that Ray Duke was bidding his subjects good night.

"But he's a big man," thought Barton, "and I like him."

HIS new-found liking was put to every kind of strain when at lunch next day Moyra's every glance and every word was directed to Ray Duke. Proximity with the public idol caused the romantic Moyra to behave very badly indeed. She even earned a rebuke from Ray Duke himself. Moyra was protesting her ambition to reveal to the world latent talents as a film actress. She felt sure—quite sure—she would be better than Mary Pickford and would confound the artistry of the sisters Gish.

"Maybe you would," he said, with a smile, "and maybe not, but one thing is sure: you'll register fine as the wife of one of the biggest men alive to-day."

When eventually the party broke up, Moyra was confronted with two items of knowledge. Item one, that Ray Duke had become and would always remain her sublime hero. Item two, that she had failed to excite in him any symptoms of admiration or even of interest. This latter realization was fruitful of a melancholy that touched despair. It was clearly evident that Ray Duke had left the table heart-whole and obsessed with a silly conviction that he had been greatly honoured by entertaining Barton. Of course, Barton was a very fine fellow and all that, but it would be idle to compare him with a man who was evidently one of the emperors of the earth, and whose powers might hourly be proved at a modest expenditure varying from ninepence to five-and-nine.

It must not be imagined that Moyra would have jilted Barton in favour of Ray Duke—for, although susceptible to emotional upheavals, she was of a fundamentally faithful disposition. Her love burnt steadily for one man, but there was room in her nature for adorations, for crushes, and for heart-breaks of another kind. She longed to be saved by Ray Duke from some tragic extremity—she longed to share with him a secret and noble understanding—she longed to speak the brave and trembling words of farewell: "We can never be more to each other than this"—hands held for a moment—eyes brimming with tears and a figure turning sadly down a hill.

Though one cannot blame an impressionable girl for falling a victim to a germ that infected millions, one does blame her for being disagreeable to Barton during the afternoon—for going up to her room on the eighth storey and lying on the bed for an hour and three-quarters—for pretending she had a headache at dinner, and for staring at Ray Duke's table throughout that meal in an effort to effect a cure. And one blames her for declining Barton's invitation to dance at the Grafton Galleries, and for saying she would rather read a book upstairs, and for

leaving him to worry through the evening as best a solitary man might.

"I hope you won't mind being alone," she said, when he accompanied her to the lift.

"I've had plenty of practice the last few years," he replied, a shade ruefully.

She resented the tone in that quick way that sometimes women will.

"He would never have answered like that," she snapped. "Perhaps you would rather be alone—for good?"

"Moyra!"

The doors were flung open and the lift swallowed her up. Gone was opportunity of making things better or worse. So Barton stamped his feet in the smoking-room for an hour, while Moyra cried on her bed and wondered why he didn't come upstairs and say he was sorry.

MRS. SORELL was spending the evening with friends and was not expected back till midnight. Barton, therefore, was relieved of the responsibility of entertaining her. After a while he took his hat and went out through the south entrance toward the Green Park. The rain had stopped. The Duke Street end of Jermyn Street was up—a barricade of poles and trestles flanked by a wall of wood blocks closing the way. The narrow pavements were crowded, and as he passed along many were the glances shot at him and many the exclamations of "Surely that's him!" "Look, isn't that—— It must be." He was surrounded. Autograph books were flourished, handkerchiefs waved.

"I give you my word I'm not the man you take me for," he said.

They let him through. The Green Park accentuated his loneliness by the number of lovers it accommodated. His club was empty, save for a couple of bores. A dreadful evening. He returned to the hotel about half-past ten, passed into the deserted courtyard, called for a drink, and, lying back in a wicker chair, looked up through the funnel of walls and windows at the twinkling stars.

Then a voice said: "May I join you?"

Lowering his gaze he saw Ray Duke.

"Yes, do," said Barton, but without enthusiasm.

"I was dead sick of doing fool tricks before the multitude, and figured I'd turn in early."

"Doing the same myself."

Ray Duke looked him over thoughtfully.

"Anything amiss?"

"Nothing. Why?"

"Wondered! Where's the *fiancée*?"

"What? Oh, headache."

"H'm!" A pause, then—"She's very young, Miss Moyra."

Barton looked up sharply but said nothing. Something in the look read "Be rather careful."

"A very sweet girl. Would you mind if I said something?"

"I dunno. I might."

"It's just this. These youngsters get a false notion of values sometimes—but it soon wears off."

Barton Grover began: "I don't quite ——"

Ray Duke held up a hand apologetically.

"I speak from a pretty wide knowledge of the subject, and I bank on a certainty when I say you won't misunderstand me."

"Well?"

"It's the way of youngsters to fall for a bit of slap stick flash stuff, but there's nothing to worry over on that score. Why, sure, they're laughing at themselves before we've finished frowning at 'em."

Barton smiled rather ruefully.

"I expect you're right," he said.

"Take it from me," Ray Duke nodded. "Mr. Grover, men like myself live on illusion, and through thick and thin we've got to keep that illusion bright and shiny, for once the tarnish settles—and the littlest thing'll tarnish it—we're done—finished. I say this to you because I'm proud to have made your acquaintance and because I'm afraid by making mine you've given yourself a small set-back. No, wait a bit. Women love illusion better than the solidest reality; that's to say, they love it for a minute or two, but while that minute or two lasts it's hell for someone. Now, when that sweet girl of yours was adulating me over the luncheon table to-day, I give you my promise I'd have done anything in the world to have shattered her illusion once and for all. But—there's a syndicate of three million sterling at the back of me, and it was a luxury I couldn't afford—and for the sake of the shareholders I had no right to afford. Well, that's what I had to say, and I'll ask you to believe it hasn't been easy."

Barton was silent for a moment before answering. At the beginning he had felt a smouldering anger, but it came to him suddenly that Ray Duke had done a difficult and a splendid thing, and had done it with singular grace. Barton was accustomed to men who, when confronted with an awkward thing to say, "umm'ed and aahed," missed the point, and stumbled along in the incomprehensible "argot of the upper Fourth remove." But here was a man who stepped in boldly, and, risking an almost inevitable accusation of conceit and self-opinion, said in effect: "Your girl has got a penny-farthing crush on me, which I hate as much as you do. Be a sport and

don't be down on her. She's only a kid, and can't help it. I'm tinsel, anyway." And because this was a kind of courage entirely alien to his own, Barton Grover's admiration was stormed and won.

Now he was a modest man, also he was shy with that terrible shyness that shrinks from the demonstrative word or act. It is enormously to his credit, therefore, that he leant across, seized Duke's hand, and wrung it fiercely. He always felt a fool when he did anything like that.

"I realized when I saw your show last night you were a plucky man," he said; "but until this minute I didn't know you were a brave man."

"Oh, shucks," said Ray Duke; "you make me kind of hot."

And from the air above them, somewhere in the region of the fourth floor, came a woman's scream and a voice that shouted "Fire!"

In a modern Tudor hotel that makes a special feature of ceiling beams and constructional timbering, the severest measures should be adopted to preclude guests and patrons from washing their hair with petrol. True, the thoughtless lady who had been guilty of this practice perished almost at the moment her husband entered and struck the match which plunged the room into flames. In his endeavour to throw a blanket round her, the unhappy husband sent the basin of petrol swilling across the floor and into the passage beyond. After that there was no stopping it. A gasping chambermaid threw a pail of water, and the blazing stuff floated to the foot of a short staircase, which caught with a roar. Persons rushed out, smelt fire, and panicked. Alarm bells sounded, and the hall porter put in a general fire call. The mezzanine, the first and second floors emptied out their guests like water from a bucket. The fifth to the eleventh floors, with the fire beneath them, had to rely for escape on the little corridors communicating with the northern or Piccadilly side of the hotel. In the centre of each of these corridors was an iron door, automatically operated from the manager's office. It was never ascertained who was the fool who put down the crank which simultaneously shut every door in every corridor and trapped the unlucky remnant who had failed to get through in time. When an effort was made to remedy this disastrous mistake it was found that the operating machinery had broken down. A gallant attempt to make use of the lifts was unsuccessful, the flames having destroyed the insulation on the wires, with the result that every fuse on the circuit was blown. The majority of the fugitives bolted up the stairs, with the fire pursuing them, and scrambled through a trap-door to the roof, where, before locating the little iron ladders provided in accordance with regulation, they suffered agonies from vertigo.

IT will be remembered that the road was up at the St. James's end of Jermyn Street. A ghastly mishap occurred at the other end. The East Lambeth escape, pelting up the short incline from St. James's Square, crashed into the Marylebone escape, which had turned into Jermyn Street from Waterloo Place. Followed a moment of indescribable chaos. The two scarlet leviathans collided, locked, and overturned, completely blocking the narrow thoroughfare with an inextricable tangle of smashed ladder sections, framework, and brass-helmeted firemen. The southern wing of the Hotel Colossal, to which the fire was confined, was therefore, by a series of unhappy events and accidents, entirely inaccessible.

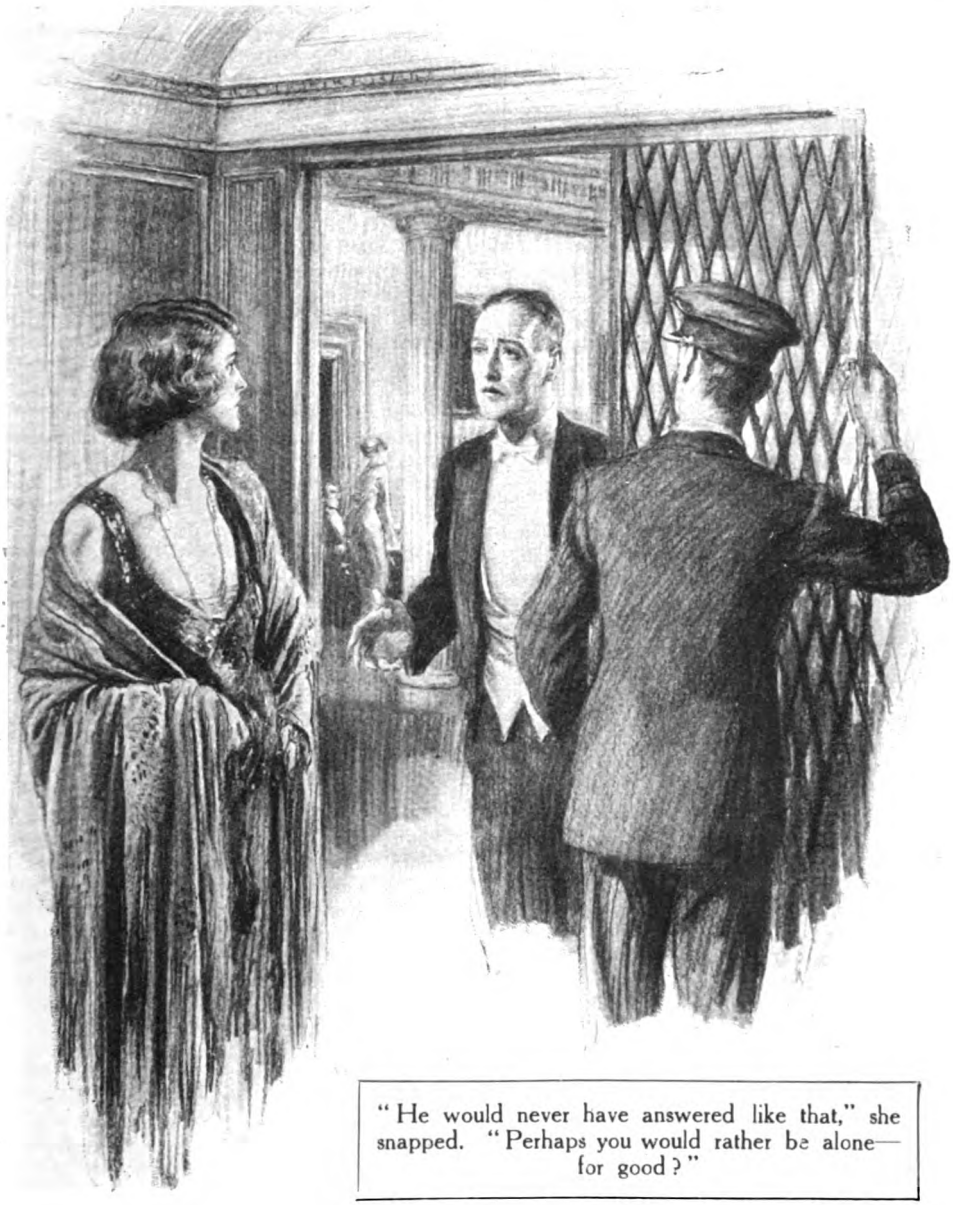
The fire by this time had got a firm grip and was gorging itself on the beams and rafters of the fourth and fifth floors and eating its way down to the third. A strong south-west wind blew the flames clear of the southern façade and sent great twisting tongues up through the central quadrangle, which sucked at the fire like a flue. Overhead, the racing clouds were flushed crimson by the horror beneath.

With the first alarm Barton Grover and Ray Duke made a dash for the glass door leading into the Piccadilly wing. There was no entrance on the Jermyn Street side. It was useless to attempt to reach the lifts, and shoulder to shoulder they fled up the stairs, arriving at the narrow southern corridor in time to meet the first wave of fleeing guests. To attempt to force a way through was to attempt the impossible.

"Higher!" roared Duke.

They tried the floor above with the same result; then the fifth, arriving in the connecting corridor as the iron doors slammed against them.

Back again. Down the stairs five at a time, Ray Duke leaping over the heads of a huddled mass of women and children on one of the landings and Barton Grover following suit. Out into the courtyard and across it, with bits of blazing woodwork showering down upon their heads. There was no exit save by the great studded door designed for the admission of the hypothetical coach and four. The door was twelve feet high and fringed with iron spikes. Barton was first over. He left a tail of his dress coat on one of the spikes. Ray Duke was a second behind, having



"He would never have answered like that," she snapped. "Perhaps you would rather be alone—for good?"

paused to throw his coat away. The huge gathering of spectators raised a yell as their hero came over. It was difficult to recognize which of the two men was which; but that didn't matter. They yelled the name they knew.

On the pavement outside they halted an instant and saw the barricade of wood blocks and poles and the wreckage of the two escapes before racing up the steps and through the circular door.

Their next appearance was on the balcony of Ray Duke's room. High overhead, on the eighth floor, was a white figure that looked down. The searchlight, thoughtfully supplied by the pushful daily, sprang to life and shed its beam upon them. The crowd and the fire roared. Up went the straight pencil of light to focus for a moment upon the girl on the balcony above.

"It's her, right enough," said Barton, gripping the rail.

He was not the sort of man to call on his Maker in moments of extremity. He said prayers at night instead.

Then from above came a thin cry :—

"Save me, Ray Duke, save me!"

Ray Duke made a megaphone of his hands and roared in a voice that controlled the legionaries of movie-land :—

"Can't you reach the roof?"

"Staircase on fire."

"Anyone else there?"

"No. Save me!"

Barton Grover said nothing. He was staring at the bald face of the hotel. The façade was smooth and straight—unlike the Piccadilly façade, which was stepped outward. The only relief was a recess about two feet wide, resembling three sides of a square and rising from the mezzanine to the underside of the roof. It carried an iron rainwater pipe anchored to the masonry.

"Save me!" wailed the little voice.

"Sure, don't worry."

The crowd heard that and pandemonium broke loose.

Barton turned an ashy face to Ray Duke.

"Can you do it?" he gasped. "Can you?"

There were beads of sweat on Ray Duke's forehead. Ever so slightly he shook his head.

"Oh, man," he answered, "it can't be done."

"And I thought——"

"It can't be done. Why, the whole place would want fixing before a man could reach that window."

"But you?"

"We're living facts now—not illusions. There's a week's work before that face could be scaled."

A crash—a tinkle of glass and a wreath of smoke. The fire had eaten through to the sixth storey and was snarling angrily for more.

"We'll see," said Barton, and sprang back into the room, whipping off his coat and waistcoat, kicking away his shoes and tearing at his collar.

"Here, wet that towel."

Ray Duke's eyes were burning with admiration.

"You're going to try?"

"I should think," said Barton, as he knotted the wringing towel over the lower half of his face.

"My God, you're lovely! Here, take this belt—may be useful if your head goes. I'll have a shot through the house next door. Damn! but you make me cry."

As Barton leapt out on the balcony, Ray Duke, tugging a cap on his head, fled through the door.

BEYOND the first amazed gasp, the watchers below were silent while the frightful adventure was enacted under the blinding eye of the searchlight. They saw a man, presumably their hero, scale the balcony, tilt his body sideways, and fall inwards towards the narrow recess in the hotel wall. It looked like suicide, had every element of self-destruction. The crowd shut their eyes and waited for that dull thud that should speak the end. They opened their eyes and saw the man clinging to the rain-pipe and bracing back and knees against the sides of the recess. Then the ascent began—the squirm and wriggle upward as a climber tackles a chimney of rock. Desperately slow but sure—sure, with a foot gained for every bracing and relaxing of the muscles. What the crowd never realized was the burning heat of the walls on the third, fourth, and fifth floors. What they could not understand was why the human fly continued to climb after he had reached the level of the eighth floor. They did not realize the utter impossibility of getting out of that narrow recess. Barton Grover went up and up until the top of his head was touching the eaves of the roof. Then—it was horrible—he stretched out a hand for the iron gutter and found his arm was a few inches too short to reach it. There was only one thing to do. He wriggled his body outward, holding himself in position with one knee and half his back, flung out his arm, and caught the gutter with the first joints of his fingers. Came a terrible moment when he dangled in mid-air from a single hand. They were fainting in ambulance loads down below before his second hand fastened on the gutter. He seemed, after that, to be getting his breath for a while; then, hand over hand, he moved along until he was above the series of balconies upon one of which Moyra was standing. It so happened that the eaves projected beyond the balconies, wherefore he swung his body to and fro, let go, and dropped like a cat on the wooden floor of the balcony. Many of the watchers declared that this was the worst moment of all. The general opinion was that he had missed his mark.

Barton remained on the top balcony two minutes looking down and working out the next move.

A glance through the window behind him disclosed a roaring furnace that was once a staircase. So that was no use. A glance to the left revealed a coatless figure struggling among the chimney-pots of what looked like a pigmy house. The figure was hidden from the view of the street. It gesticulated fiercely, and Barton recognized Ray Duke and waved a hand. On the third balcony below lay Moyra. She had fainted. How

to reach her was the puzzle. The puzzle was solved by Ray Duke, who made zig-zags in the air, fork-lightning gestures. Barton did not comprehend, and the gestures were repeated. Then he nodded. Every window in this part of the building boasted a little balcony. There were rows and rows of them. Barton climbed over the side of his and leapt crossways and down to the one on the floor below. He repeated the leap, this time jumping the other way, then again until he had arrived level with the one upon which Moyra was lying. The last leap was the most spectacular, for he lacked the advantage of the drop. He took off from the rail—a thirteen-foot standing jump. The crowd went mad about it. The force of their cheering shook windows several streets away.

Being a very modest man he did not take the swooning Moyra to his arms and kiss her before the enraptured gaze of the public. Instead, he looked about him and wondered what the dickens to do next. A rosy light behind him betrayed the fact that her room was on fire. Retreat in that direction was cut off. Spurts of flame were appearing at windows above and below. The situation looked pretty hopeless. Then the window blew out and a smother of smoke enveloped him.

Torturers down all the ages have realized the efficacy of fire as a means of developing an idea. It acted like magic with Barton Grover. There was a telephone cable immediately overhead which slanted across to a chimney-pot on the other side of the road. It was within reach and modesty did not discourage him. He hitched round it the belt Ray Duke had given him, slipped his arm through, clasped Moyra to his breast, and went across Jermyn Street as it may be supposed no other man has or ever will effect a crossing. And the ecstasy of the crowd touched a pinnacle hitherto unreached. Barton Grover, secure from observation, fainted on the flat roof opposite, and first to reach the spot was Ray Duke, whose shirt-sleeves were badly burnt and whose face was scarlet.

Barton looked at Ray and smiled, and Ray dashed the heel of a hand across his eyes because he was crying.

"This damned smoke," he said. Neither of them seemed to be thinking about Moyra.

In the street below the name "Ray Duke! Ray Duke! Ray Duke!" swelled and swelled and swelled.

"Hark at that scum!" snorted the great man; "but they shall know if it costs me my last cent."

Barton Grover shook his head.

"I don't want it," he said. "It isn't my job. She's safe, thank God."

"They shall know," was repeated.

"There's a three million syndicate at the back of you—don't forget that."

"Sure it means ruin—and worse—laughter, but——"

"Look here," said Barton, violently, "I won't have it. D'you understand? I like you, and—I swear I'll deny it in every newspaper in the land."

Ray Duke wavered.

"Sure there's the syndicate—but——" He looked at Moyra. "Oh, man! it isn't fair to that kid."

"That kid," said Moyra, opening unexpected eyelids, "knows"—and she rubbed her cheek against Barton's shoulder—"and she's satisfied with what she's got."

A trap-door flew open and a flood of firemen, policemen, and reporters surged on to the roof. Barton Grover was the man who met the tide.

"Mr. Ray Duke positively refuses all interviews on this subject," he said, "and so, for that matter, do I."

"May we ask the name of the gentleman who is addressing us?" said a polite little reporter. "I happened to see you rescue a number of children from the roof opposite, and would be glad——"

"Here, chuck that," said Ray Duke, at the risk of being misunderstood.

IN a private room at the Piccadilly Hotel some hours later he observed:—

"Well, if you insist, I guess you're not a man to be shaken from his purpose, but I've a confession I'd like to make here and now."

"Aha!"

"That fight with the shark."

"Yes."

"There was a sheet of plate-glass atween us."

"But how about those children on the roof, though?"

"Oh, nix," said Ray Duke, colouring.

In the newspapers the following morning was praise in pæans. One of the lesser journals was kind enough to say that Mr. Barton Graver (misspelt) was also concerned in the work of rescue.

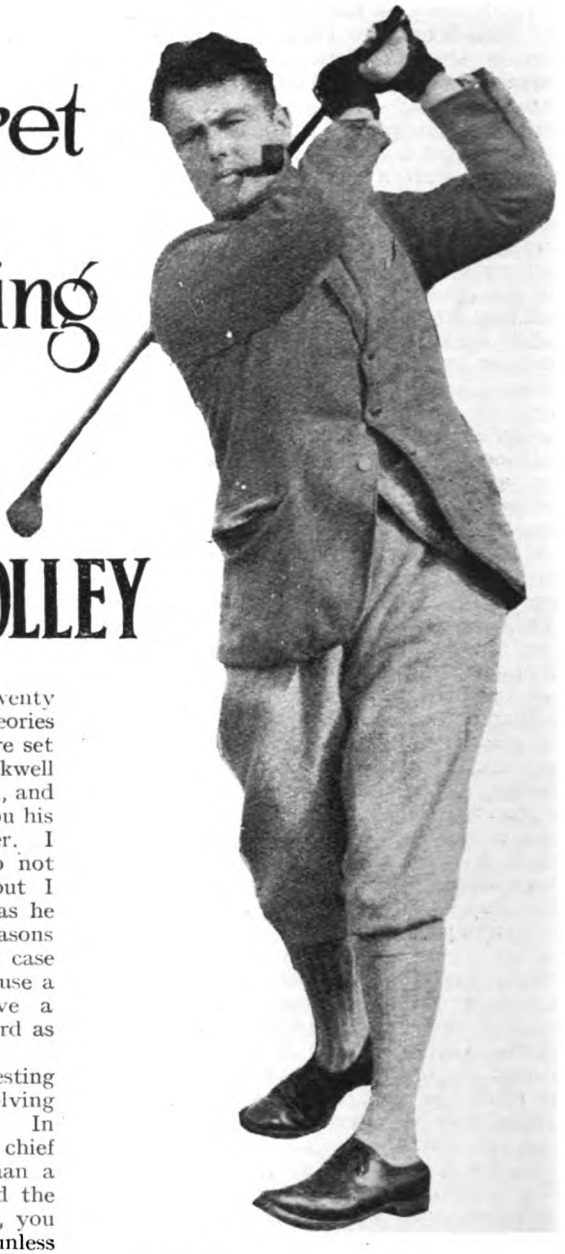
He, however, was a modest man and didn't mind.

Whether his modesty was strong enough to be proof against the fabulous offer to enter into an acting partnership with the firm of Ray Duke Films, Inc., an offer which was dispatched from Los Angeles some weeks later and arrived in London while Barton was in distant parts enjoying his honeymoon, is a problem which only time and his ambitious and adoring wife would decide.

The Secret of Long Driving

by

CYRIL J. H. TOLLEY



IN a book that was written some twenty odd years ago, the methods and theories of the celebrities of that day were set down in print. Mr. Edward Blackwell was amongst the number who appeared, and I think it is of interest to put before you his views as to why he was a long driver. I respectfully crave his pardon if I do not quite correctly state his remarks, but I believe the following is more or less as he wrote it: "I can give you four reasons why I am a long driver: In the first case I am a big, strong man; secondly, I use a big, powerful club; thirdly, I have a perfect swing; and, lastly, I hit as hard as I jolly well can."

Now, I think that that is a very interesting statement, and it goes a long way to solving the problem of length from the tee. In those four headings you have all the chief factors that go towards making a man a long driver. You have the build and the strength to wield a heavy instrument, you also have the power to hit hard, and unless he had possessed the ability to swing correctly, you would not have his name before you as one of the most successful and famous golfers of the North. He is credited with marvellous feats of skill on the classic course of St. Andrews—how in one round he not only put his second on the green at the "long hole out" but did identically the same thing at the "long hole in," and for the benefit of those of you who do not know this wonderful links, I will tell you that both of these holes measure well over five hundred yards. He also on one windy day, at the last hole on the same course, drove his ball so far that it pitched first bounce on the steps of the club-house, three hundred and seventy yards away. Each of these little efforts was made years before the rubber ball was thought of. Nowadays, with the present ball, it is not a very uncommon thing to hear that a man

has reached the fifth and fourteenth greens in two shots in the same round, and it has even been claimed that it has been done with an iron club for the second shots, but I doubt if the eighteenth hole episode will ever be equalled. It is a fine sight to see the old master on the Royal and Ancient course, his massive frame, and splendid swing as he gives the ball a tremendous blow, the report of the impact of which could only be deadened by old Greig's voice as he ordered the straying nursemaids and the prams off the road at the first hole. Personally I have not asked Mr. Blackwell how he obtained his length, but I have no doubt that he would still give the same four reasons that he gave in the past. And if you who are reading this article belong to the long-driving race, I think you are quite safe in giving the same answer. For those of you who would wish to join this happy gathering, I will try to put you on the road to achieve, if not worldly, then local fame.

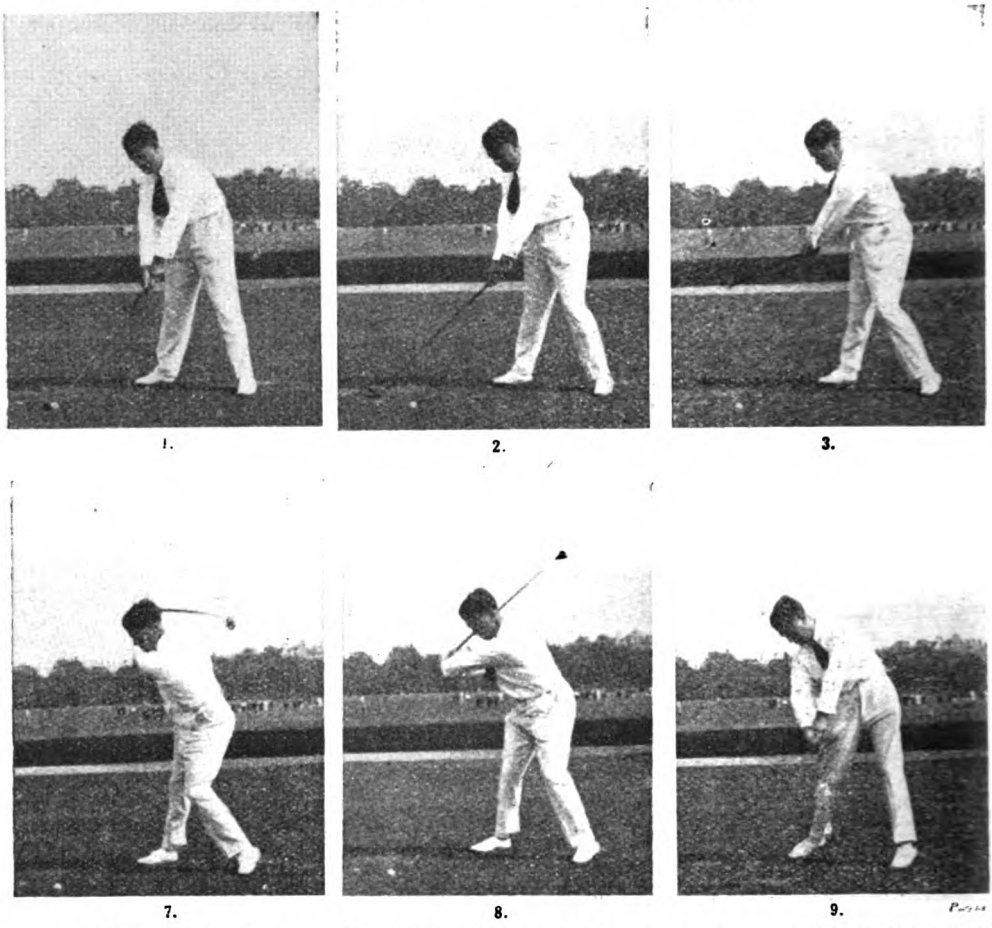
WHEN I went up to Oxford I first played with Mr. Roger Wethered. Up till then I had played practically no serious competitive golf and had managed to out-drive my local fellow-players by some dozen yards or so. But when we met the trouble began, both for him and me. When you know you can hit a ball considerably farther than your opponent you usually manage to drive comparatively straight, and you only go off the line when you are trying to carry some unheard-of distance for your own glorification. But when you are really up against flesh and blood it is entirely a different matter. During our first game at Frilford, we both managed, by dint of much exertion and strain, to out-distance the other several times, but this lasted for only a few holes. By the time we reached the fourteenth it was quite impossible to estimate who was the longest driver—the only thing we could pride ourselves on as the game progressed was that we were less distance in the rough than our opponent. First I might be seventy yards in the rough on the right and he merely fifty yards in the rough on the left. That was a moral victory for him at that hole. At the next the scales were turned and he was probably a hundred yards in the bushes on the right and I was on the fairway of some other hole. The effect of this one game was far-reaching. For weeks neither of us need ever have carried a brassy, for we never played off a fairway, but I sincerely think we both got much stronger physically, for we had so much niblick work. But I bore my reader with my past little troubles, and open up old sores in the golfing career of my more famous literary friend.

It is a difficult task to be instructive and still not tedious. It is easy to instruct personally, for you can always repudiate an oral statement if necessary, but when it is down in black and white the damning evidence can always be thrust under your nose if by any chance you have erred.

"To err is human," it is written, but to write instructional golf it is better to be either a Dempsey or an invalid.

The majority of golfers do not possess more than one of the four things that Mr. Blackwell claims made him a long driver, and the one that all can possess is the artificial element, and that one is the big, powerful club. I must leave it to the player's judgment to select the weight of club which he thinks will propel the ball the greatest distance. Most golfers are not built on the massive lines of Mr. Blackwell, but if they are they probably find that they do not lack distance, yet at the same time they may feel that they should hit farther than they do. Others find that, unlike Mr. Blackwell, the harder they hit the less distance they cover, and also their accuracy is affected when additional force is applied to the stroke. Few possess the perfect swing, in spite of constant reference to golfing literature and photographs of the leading stylists. Although I cannot offer you hints on how to become more muscular, I will attempt to put you on the road to perfecting your swing and to give you the satisfaction of knowing that not only are you hitting your hardest, but you are reaping nearly the full reward for your exertion.

To drive the ball at all you must have the club moving forward at a certain smooth pace—the faster it travels the greater the impact and the greater the distance in flight of the ball. That is, of course, quite obvious to all. Now the first thing I recommend you to do is to get into the habit of looking at the ball. Everybody knows that is the thing to do, and he fondly imagines he is doing so. How many, when you ask them, can tell you the exact part of the ball they focus their eyes on? At least seventy-five per cent. candidly don't know, a few say on top and a few at the back, a few an inch behind, and so on. I am convinced that this one thing is the secret of the game. Perhaps with your kind of vague survey of the ball you achieve moderate success, possibly you are a very fine player, and if you are, it is only because you are a natural hitter of a ball, be it stationary or moving. But if you would but concentrate your gaze on a particular place on the ball —I will tell you in a few words the place I

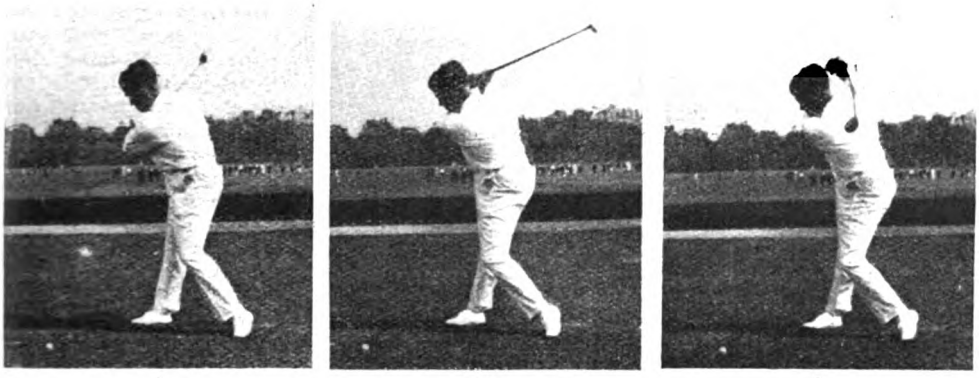


EVERY STAGE IN MR. TOLLEY'S DRIVE CAN BE STUDIED IN THIS EXCELLENT

have found to be the most convenient spot—not only would you make far less devastating shots, and consequently beat all your opponents who did not adopt your plan, but any not quite correctly timed shots would not be so completely foozled, and would fly in some way in the direction you wish to play, and your enjoyment of the game would increase by leaps and bounds.

In all games the art of competing successfully depends entirely on your power of judging the distance you are from the object and instinctively estimating the correct moment to register your blow or stroke. With a moving ball it is very difficult to time the shot correctly, but it is not so very hard to propel the ball forward provided you have made contact, for the impact of two bodies moving towards each other must have far greater results on the weaker one than can be obtained by a moving body hitting a stationary one. At golf it is the player who produces all the energy necessary to move the ball. For that purpose it is more than essential that he should correctly judge his position in relation to the exact place where he wishes to make the impact. So many beginners say that in the art of decapitating daisies they are extraordinarily skilled, but when it comes to hitting a golf ball they are as mere infants. Surely that goes to prove that as a daisy has but little magnitude, there is far less surface over which the eyes can roam, and consequently it is far easier to hit. But when you come to a golf ball, perhaps a hundred times larger, the fact that you are not concentrating your eyes on one particular spot must tend to give you a larger margin of error, and consequently you strike the ball but seldom.

Here is something I would like you to do, but it is difficult, for it is new, and it also requires a considerable amount of concentration. The next time you go out to play, tee your ball so that you have one particular



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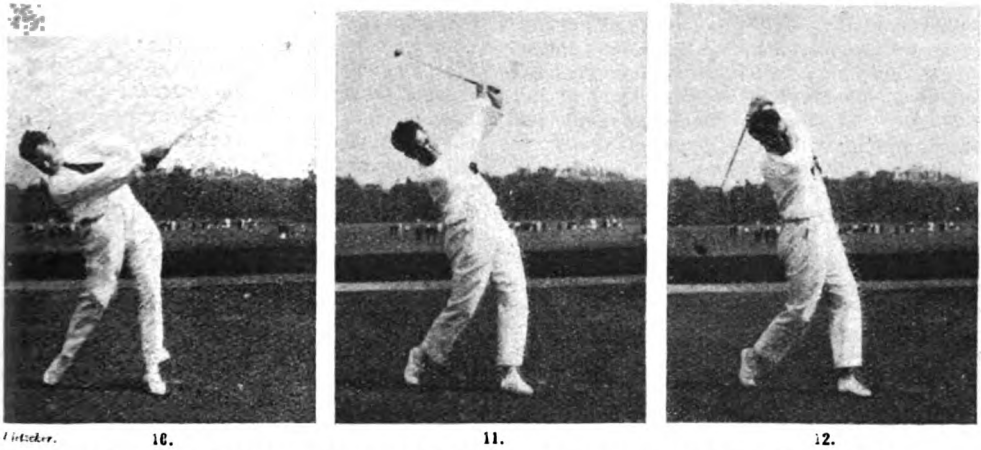

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SERIES OF PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN DURING HIS VISIT TO AMERICA LAST YEAR.

recess in the marking directly at the back of the ball. You can for practice put a spot of paint on one recess to accustom yourself to looking at one spot. You wish to hit the ball in the air—you must therefore hit the ball at the back; and what better place to look at is there than the place you wish to hit? Right, you have this special recess to look at, you address the ball, you gaze fondly in the direction you wish the ball to go, your eye returns to the *same* recess, you swing back, you strike at the recess, you keep your eye fixed, for the veriest second after the ball has flown, on the spot where the recess was, and, joy! the ball has been hit firmly and surely in the direction in which you so fervently wished it to go. Now, I imagine that in this respect you possess some sort of golfing style. You may not be a Harry Vardon or a George Duncan, but you know the rudiments of the game. Therefore, for you the rest is simple, and in a few days you become a trial to that long-suffering body, the handicapping committee.

To those of you who are not in the position to consider yourselves so far advanced, I will attempt to give some advice for obtaining a fairly respectable style—that is, provided you do not already possess one.

The first and probably the most important point to notice is the grip. Hold the club loosely in the fingers, the grip of the left hand a trifle tighter than that of the right. It is a matter of opinion whether to adopt the Vardon grip—that is, the overlapping of the little finger of the right hand — or the more natural non-overlapping grip. Personally, I prefer not to overlap, for I do not consider it in any way helps a player, but is rather apt to make him feel cramped. Also I have noticed that the very longest players, who obtain their length by purely swinging, and not hitting, at the ball, adopt this method. Be it as it may, I do not wish you to change your pet grip if you have any

confidence in it. Stretch the thumb of the left hand nearly as far as it will go down the top right-hand side of the handle, turning the left hand over sufficiently far as to see two knuckles. Place the right hand so that the life line—for this, if in ignorance, consult a palmist—rests on the left thumb. With the ball placed a trifle nearer the left foot than the right, and not too far away, address the ball. Your knees are slightly bent. Now you have to remember this very important point. The left hand controls the back swing and the right hand is merely a support. Take the club back *very* slowly flat along the ground, so that the bottom of the head is grazing the grass. Do this for at least ten inches.

You must now bear in mind that your backbone is the axis on which your body pivots or turns, and its slightest lateral movement is going to ruin the stroke. Having mastered this preliminary movement, carry the club back farther with the left hand, keeping the left arm straight but *not* rigid. This arm will then drag the left shoulder after it until, in gazing at the recess at the back of the ball, you are looking over the point of the left shoulder. Keeping the right elbow as conveniently close to the side as possible, and swinging back, if anything, more slowly than when you started the swing, take the club to the horizontal or just a little more.

THIS slow swing back is most essential. A great number of players who want to hit the ball a long way dash the club back at terrific speed, quite fatigue themselves with the effort, and have no strength with which to bring down the club. All their hitting force is expended in the back swing; but if you take the club back slowly, you not only do not lose your balance but, if anything, you work yourself into a kind of frenzy in your impatience to give the ball the terrific blow that your slow swing has temporarily delayed.

At the finish of the back swing try to have the toe of the club pointing towards the ground, the left heel *very* slightly raised, and the weight fairly equally distributed on both legs, with the right leg braced and its weight on the right heel. Start the downward swing with the left hand, and very slowly, until, when the hands get level with the chin, the right hand takes control. Accelerate the movement of the club smoothly until it is moving at its greatest pace at the moment of impact and immediately afterwards. Soon after the right hand becomes master, the right arm straightens but does not become too rigid, and with both arms straight and the club head within six inches of the ball, the grip of both hands on the club tightens. As it was so essential to have a straight left arm going back it is doubly important that the right remains straight until it is at least parallel with the ground and pointing towards the hole. At the moment of impact the left heel is on the ground and the weight is now more on the left leg than hitherto. The pivoting on the backbone is now reversed, and at the moment that the right arm makes a parallel line with the ground the eyes are looking over the right shoulder at the place where the ball rested. Do not restrict the follow-through—it all tends to make you throw out your right arm towards the hole, which is very important. Try to imagine that your left hip is fixed, for if you watch long drivers they all keep their left hips in, and, as it were, they appear to hit against them. When the club head has gone through to the horizontal the toe should point towards the ground, the left leg is braced, and the right knee is bent. To keep your left hip in it is as well to try to wedge your left foot into the ground, as it were, to claw the ground with your toes, for the slightest slip of the foot in the direction of the hole will invariably result in a slice.

To sum up, play the stroke smoothly and slowly, have nothing rigid or strained; above all, glue your eyes to the one recess at the back of the ball—and the long driving championship is at Troon in June.

WE HOPE TO PUBLISH FURTHER ARTICLES BY MR. TOLLEY FROM TIME TO TIME.

GIBSON AND THE WAGER

by

DENIS MACKAIL

ILLUSTRATED BY FRANK GILLETT, R.I.

"I WONDER if you have ever paused to consider," said Gibson, sinking back into the arm-chair next to mine and crossing his legs, "what a debt you writers owe to the Savoy Hotel?

"No, no," he added, as I was about to reply to this observation, "I'm not speaking in terms of money. So far as that goes, I agree with you that very few writers ever enter the Savoy at all—except as other people's guests. But I was thinking of the indispensable part which that particular hotel has come to play in the opening scenes of what are generally known as 'Shockers.' However successful rival establishments may be in other respects, the position of the Savoy as the one suitable setting for the beginning of this kind of story remains unassailable. I fancy that its closeness to the river may have something to do with this; for there seems a very general belief among authors of fiction that once you have got your characters on to the Thames Embankment, all ordinary laws of probability are suspended. Curiously enough, I have noticed the same feeling in New York in connection with Riverside Drive. What is it, I wonder, about these waterside boulevards——"

He paused meditatively for a moment, and then continued:—

"And yet, after all, there may be more in it than one would at first sight believe. There is no smoke without fire, you know. And, oddly enough, one of the strangest experiences in my own life had its origin in a dinner at the Café Parisien at the Savoy."

I saw now where he had been leading me.

"Perhaps you will tell me about it?" I suggested.

"Nothing would give me greater pleasure," he replied; and he began his story at once.

ALTHOUGH he has played many minor parts in his time (said Gibson), it is quite likely that you have never heard of my friend John Freemantle, the actor. I certainly doubt whether I should ever have heard of him myself, but for the fact that in the distant past we were schoolfellows together. And even so, if we had not always kept up a fluctuating kind of acquaintanceship, his name would have meant nothing to me on a theatre programme; for until he left school and was given his first part—as one of twenty-five guests at a bigamous wedding—he had been known to the world more simply and less euphoniously as J. F. Snell.

Perhaps it was his experience of the temptation which he had thus afforded to the shafts of schoolboy wit which made him abandon his original surname and expand his initials; possibly there were family reasons of which he never told me; but in any case it was as John Freemantle that he assumed, with great satisfaction to himself, a series of more or less insignificant *rôles* on the London and provincial boards. Fortunately for him, he was possessed of quite adequate private means, and so long as he could pass through a stage-door about half-past seven for six nights in the week, change his clothes, smear his face, exhibit the result to the public, and leave again about half-past eleven, he was perfectly happy and perfectly harmless. It was only in the intervals between his engagements that he would develop signs of a certain sensitiveness about his career and his profession which made him a little exhausting to the people whom he met. And as he was incapable in any circumstances of discussing any subject unconnected with the stage, I, at any rate, had come to take special pains only to see him when I was certain that he was in what he used to call a "shop."

But when, one day, I found a telephone message waiting for me which contained an invitation to dine with Mr. Freemantle at the Savoy Hotel—where he was then staying—at seven o'clock sharp, I had very little hesitation in accepting it. For not only did it seem incredible to me that

anyone could wish to dine at such an hour unless they had some immediate and pressing reason, but I also remembered, as it happened, that I had read a notice of a new play, well within the last three weeks, in which John Freemantle's name had actually been mentioned. Of course, it was a bit awkward that I had neither seen this entertainment nor for the moment could recall its title, but still, with less than an hour for our dinner, there seemed to be considerable hope that a little tactful lying would enable me to conceal these facts.

I found him waiting for me when I arrived, and he seized my forearm affectionately with a sort of Shakespearean grip.

"Good lad," he said, throwing the words well off his chest. "Shall we to the banquet?"

"Oh, rather," I answered, shaking myself free. I got rid of my hat and coat, and we went through into the Café Parisien.

John Freemantle seemed to be well known to the waiters, and a group of them conducted us to a table by the wall. For some minutes all conversation was directed to the subject of food, but I knew that as soon as this had been settled I would be expected to talk about the stage; and as, after all, I was getting a very good dinner for nothing, I couched my preliminary observation in the form which I felt would make it easiest for my host to include also in his answer some reference to himself.

"Well, John," I said—I called him "John" more because he called me "Henry" than because we were really intimate—"well, John, how's the show going?"

This seemed to me the very essence of tact. But to my surprise his face darkened, his brows descended, his lip curled, and his voice shook with passion.

"The show!" he snorted. "It came off on Saturday. Killed dead by the critics—curse their souls!"

I'm afraid my next remark escaped me before I could stop it.

"Then why on earth are we dining so early?" I asked.

Yet, as a matter of fact, I could hardly have said anything which would more quickly have restored John Freemantle's conceit. He looked round, gathered in the eyes of the nearest half-dozen diners, settled his tie with a flourish, and answered in a very loud voice:—

"The fact is, old man, that I'm so used to dining early before the theatre that I quite forgot to make it later."

Again he looked at the neighbouring tables, collected his meed of imaginary applause, and attacked his *consommé*. I was left wondering, for the thousandth time, why it was that actors should, simply by virtue of their calling and quite irrespective of their merits or success in it, suffer under such an inexplicable delusion as to their importance in the eyes of the general public. From the expression on John Freemantle's face one might have thought that he had just said, "I always dine early because it is my practice to qualify for the Royal Humane Society's medal immediately afterwards," or, "because it is my custom to spend the evening discovering the North Pole."

BUT, poor fellow, his complacency didn't last long. He entertained me during the fish and entrée with details of the alleged conspiracy which had resulted in his last engagement terminating so suddenly, and from then on he delivered a series of slashing attacks on all the most celebrated professionals of the day. This one was known to owe his success to Court influence, that one had never been sober for twenty-five years, and yet another had only escaped prosecution for the most unmentionable crimes by leaving hastily on a world-tour. As for acting, of course, they could none of them ever hope to act. They couldn't play gentlemen because they had all been brought up at reformatories, and they couldn't play character-parts because they hadn't even troubled to master the elements of make-up; or if they had, then they were too conceited to risk spoiling their own beauty.

"But wait a minute," I said at this point "Surely you'll admit that Dash"—I named a well-known tragedian who had recently become his own manager—"surely you'll admit that Dash knows how to make up? I shall never forget seeing him as the hump-backed negro in—in whatever the thing was called."

"Dash?" sneered John Freemantle, snapping his fingers; and then, a little inconsequentially as it seemed to me, he added: "Did you ever see me as the old grandfather in 'Mrs. Murgatroyd's Mistake'?"

Strangely enough, I had. In the play in question John Freemantle had appeared on the stage for rather under two minutes, but on me, at any rate, he had made a deep and lasting impression. Never in my life had I seen anyone so incredibly ancient, so completely gone at the knees, so amazingly quavering about the voice, or so incomparably unlike anything in heaven or earth. A very conservative estimate would have set this grandfather's age at two hundred and fifty years—and even at that no one could say that he had worn well.

"Do you know," pursued John, fixing me with his eyes, "that it used to take me two

hours to make up for that part every night, and another hour and a half to get it all off again ? "

" No ! " I exclaimed. " Did it really ? "

" It did, though," he answered. " Why, at the dress rehearsal they nearly had me turned out of the theatre. No one had the least idea who I was. That was something like a make-up ! "

" It was indeed," I said, fervently.

" But it isn't only old men that I can manage so well," he went on, smiling happily. " Why, I'd bet you five pounds that I could come up to you in any character that you like to mention and, until I told you, you'd never guess who it was."

This, I thought, was going a bit far. Even such a masterpiece as the old grandfather must have aroused my suspicions anywhere but at a theatre.

" I'll bet you ten pounds you couldn't," I retorted. " Why, of course I should know you."

John Freemantle slapped the table-cloth with his hand.

" Done ! " he exclaimed. " Now, look here. Ten pounds in even money that I come up and speak to you, and that you don't know who I am until I tell you. Is it a go ? "

" Of course it is," I said. " That tenner will suit me very well. But wait a second ; we must have a time-limit. I'm not going to go on looking out for you in one disguise after another for the rest of my life."

" I'm only going to try it once," said John, " because that will be quite enough. But, to make it easier for you, I'll give myself a time-limit of three days. Now, then, we'll start from when you leave the Savoy to-night. Is that all right ? "

" Quite," I said. " So I'll begin spending the money at once." And I called to the waiter to bring us some still bigger cigars.

" Help yourself," I said to John. " No one can say that I'm not generous with my winnings."

HE took his gift at once, but so moody and abstracted had he suddenly become that it was fully five minutes before he remembered to light it ; and from then onwards until I left him I could see that his whole mind was given up to considering exactly what form of disguise he should assume for my benefit. Such answers as he made to my observations showed clearly that his thoughts were anywhere but in the Café Parisien, and at last, shortly before ten, worn out by his silence and preoccupation, I got up and said I must be going. If I had stayed any longer, I should have begun to yawn in his face.

" Look here," he said, frowning ponderously ; " about this bet. You'll promise not to say afterwards that you knew it was me all the time ? "

" My dear John," I answered with dignity, " I am an Englishman and a sportsman. Of course I shall be scrupulously honest over this business. If I don't answer you inside two minutes by saying ' Hallo, John ! ' then the money is yours. Is that good enough for you ? "

" Oh, I don't want to make it as difficult for you as all that ! " he protested.

" You are at liberty to make it as difficult as ever you can," I said. And having thanked him again for my evening's entertainment, I saw him into the lift and turned to leave the hotel.

But at this moment, as chance would have it, I suddenly felt a slap on the back, and looking round saw a second cousin of mine, named Aubrey Wotherspoon, and his wife.

" Hallo ! " said Aubrey, heartily. " The very man we want ! Marjorie's dead keen on dancing, and I've twisted my hock." (He was a hunting man, as you may have gathered.) " Come along to the ballroom and give her a turn."

Of course, I said I should be delighted ; I couldn't very well say anything else ; and for more than another hour Marjorie and I capered together over the parquet, while Aubrey sat beaming at us by the wall. I have never been a very good dancer, but my partner made it as easy for me as she could ; and I was just getting properly into my stride, as it were, when some other friends of theirs came drifting in from a theatre, and I found myself released. For another ten minutes or so I hung about, waiting to see if I should be wanted again. But Marjorie was now hard at work with a young man who dipped and plunged like a pro., and I realized that I had served my turn. I said good night to Aubrey, collected my hat and coat, and went out into the Strand.

The rain which had been falling when I arrived had now stopped, and after my evening in the well-heated hotel I thought it would be pleasant to walk at any rate some of the way home towards Down Street, where I then lived. I set off at once at a steady pace.

I had reached the neighbourhood of Leicester Square without meeting with any adventures, but at this point my wandering thoughts were suddenly recalled to this world. A figure in a raincoat and a battered felt hat had come darting out of an archway, and before I could slip to one side or ward him off, he and I became involved in a kind of staggering embrace.

"Look out where you're going, sir," I said, shoving him away from me. And as I did so, the figure looked up at me cringingly. In the light from the nearest street-lamp I saw a villainous, wrinkled, yellow face; the face, in fact, of an unmistakable Chinaman.

He stood there, showing his discoloured teeth in a grin of cowardly defiance, and at the same moment a sudden light burst upon me. I stepped forward again.

"Hallo, John!" I said, cheerily. "Where's my ten pounds?"

I just had time to see the look of horror and surprise which flashed into his countenance, when a heavy hand descended on my shoulder from behind.

"Now, then; now, then," said a gruff voice. "What about it?"

I looked round quickly, and found myself in the grip of an enormous police-constable. With his other hand he had already caught hold of the supposed Chinaman by the sleeve of his raincoat.

"Vine Street," said the policeman, laconically. "Now come along like good boys."

I peered under his helmet. For the moment the thought had darted into my mind that it might be he, and not the Chinaman, who was really John Freemantle. But he was a good six inches too tall. I turned back again.

"Come on, John," I said. "Tell him what you're doing."

"None of that!" the policeman broke in. "I seed what you was doing all right; and I 'eard what you said. You come along quiet."

"You don't understand, sergeant," I said. "This gentleman is a friend of mine. We're doing this for a bet."

"You tell that to the superintendent," replied the policeman. "If you say anything else, I shall 'ave to report it. 'Ere!" he added, raising his voice to a passing taxi-driver. The cab slowed down and stopped by the kerb.

"In you get," said the policeman.

There seemed nothing for it but to obey. If John chose to carry his joke as far as the police-station, the only alternative was a free fight on the pavement.

"Vine Street," shouted the policeman out of the window, and off we went.

THE next thing of which I became aware was that my fellow-prisoner was leaning heavily against me on the back seat; and, as I tried to edge away from him, he seized my hand and, with a whispered word which I failed to catch, forced something into it that felt like an envelope. I supposed that this was the ten pounds; that John meant—for some reason which only an actor could understand—to carry his imposture through to the finish; and that this was his way of getting me to back him up. I slipped it quietly into my pocket, wondering what the deuce he was going to do when we reached the police-station.

But at this moment we swung into the brilliant lights of Piccadilly Circus. I turned my head to inspect with the help of this illumination the details of my friend's unexpectedly successful make-up; and I saw at once what you have probably already guessed. The man wasn't John Freemantle at all. No disguise on earth could have transformed my old schoolfellow's well-marked features into that flattened mask. I felt a brief sensation of indescribable nausea. And then, as the cab moved forward out of the block in which it had been waiting, I took a desperate resolution.

"Look here, inspector," I said, addressing the policeman. "I give you my word that this thing's a mistake. I've never seen this man before in my life. Now, if five pounds——"

"That'll do," snapped the incorruptible official. "You'll be sorry you said that, my man!"

"No, I won't," I said; and at the same moment I flung myself at the door of the cab, wrenched the handle back, fell heavily into the street, bounded up again, and was off as fast as I could possibly tear. From behind me I could hear a roar of baffled rage, but I never looked round for a second. I dodged in front of a motor-omnibus, scattered a group of pedestrians on the pavement, dived down the alley by the side of St. James's Church, swung across Jermyn Street and down York Street, and never stopped until I had reached the Wanderers' Club in St. James's Square. I hurtled through the glass doors.

"Is Mr. Smithson in the club?" I asked, breathlessly, of the porter.

I had chosen the first name that had entered my head, for there was no time to stop and think, but, to my surprise, I seemed to have hit on a real one. I saw the porter hastily setting my dress clothes against my muddy and exhausted appearance, and deciding that they could be held to excuse the manner of my intrusion, and then he answered:—

"I don't think so, sir. But if you'll wait in here, I'll go and make sure."

I found myself conducted into a little sort of waiting-room leading out of the hall, and there I did my best to regain my breath while the porter went on his search. In a couple of minutes he was back again.

"No, sir," he informed me. "Mr. Smithson left half an hour ago."

"Too bad," I said. "Well, I must try

"Vine Street," said the policeman. "Now come along like good boys."

and get him at home." I crossed to the window and pulled back the curtain, as if to see whether it were still raining. There was no one in sight outside. My captor must, I thought, have decided to stick to his bird in the hand and to let me go. It seemed to me a very sensible decision.

"Well, good night," I said. "I'm sorry to have troubled you. By the way, could you lend me a clothes-brush for a moment? I've been rather badly splashed by a taxi."

"Certainly, sir," said the porter, and he most obligingly detailed an underling to assist in removing the signs of my recent adventure. Again I expressed my thanks, and then, with a rapid glance from the porch, which still revealed a deserted pavement, I turned up the collar of my coat and moved quickly away.

I HAD reached St. James's Street without further molestation, and had just decided to treat myself to a cigarette, when, in feeling in my pocket for my case, my hand lighted unexpectedly on something else.

"By Jove!" I muttered, pulling out the envelope which was now my only souvenir of that brief but unpleasant cab-ride. "I wonder what's in it?"

I moved nearer to a lamp-post and examined the outside. The flap was gummed firmly down along its whole length, and apart from certain dirty smudges both sides were completely blank. As I pinched it thoughtfully between my finger and thumb, its contents seemed to yield and shift beneath the pressure. "Well, why not?" I asked myself, and with a quick movement I tore off one of the corners.

It was half-full of what looked at first sight like tooth-powder. And yet was it likely that anyone with teeth like the ones I remembered in that Chinaman's mouth could have any real use for such stuff? I thought of tasting it, but no, it might be some kind of poison. I thought of throwing it away, but this seemed rather unadventurous. Finally, I inserted a cautious finger, brought it out again with a little of the powder on the end, and—very gingerly—bent over it to discover how it smelt.

It was exactly at this moment that I heard a hoarse voice addressing me.

"Cheese it," said this voice, in urgent tones. "Do you want the bulls after you?"

I spun round quickly. There was an outlandish-looking man standing by my side, with a black beard and a broad-brimmed hat—rather like a stage conspirator.

"Bulls?" I repeated. "What on earth do you mean?"

"You'll see what I mean all right," he said, huskily, "if you start sniffing snow on the middle of the sidewalk."

"Snow?" I echoed. "But this can't be snow."

"Coke, then," he substituted.

"And still less is it coke," I added.

"Say," said the bearded man; "you're pretty fresh, ain't you?"

Again his meaning seemed to have escaped me. I peered questioningly into his face, and at the same instant something unnatural about the way that his beard joined his cheek connected itself suddenly with a thought which in the excitement of my escape had almost gone out of my head. How on earth John Freemantle had managed to shadow me all the evening without my noticing him, I had no idea; but if I were quick, my ten pounds would still be safe.

"Hallo, John!" I said, loudly. "You nearly had me then."

He looked at me in a kind of puzzled fury, but I wasn't going to stand for any more bluff.

"Come on," I said, encouragingly. "Off with the jolly old beard."

At once a venomous look came into his dark eyes. He made a quick feint with his left hand, and as I started back he snatched the envelope from me, dealt me a savage kick on the leg, and the next moment was tearing away down the hill.

"Dash it all!" I thought. "I must have made another mistake." And, then, as a second wave of agony swept over my injured limb, I lifted up my voice.

"Hi!" I shouted. "Hi! Come here at once!"

He turned his head for an instant—I can only imagine to yell some parting defiance—and as he did so I saw a vast, tenebrous figure step out from the darkness of a shop entrance and lift him clean off his feet with one hand.

"Now, then!" said this apparition, warningly, and then he too saw the envelope. "Ah, would you?" he growled, closing a gigantic fist over it. "Got you with the goods this time, Jack. Eh?"

Although I had, as you know, very special reasons just at the moment for avoiding all unnecessary dealings with the Metropolitan Police, and although there could be no shadow of doubt that this mammoth figure was a plain-clothes officer, my curiosity overcame me. I drew nearer to the little tableau.

"Are you coming quiet now?" I heard the detective inquire, and even the unwelcome familiarity of his words hadn't the power to drive me away.

"None of your frame-ups," snarled the captive, wriggling impotently. "I was

given that envelope by that guy over there. I ain't got no more notion what's in it than nobody at all. And take your fist out of my windpipe," he added, feebly.

The plain-clothes officer looked at me suspiciously, but it was too late to retire. I opened my overcoat, so that my dress shirt should show to the best effect.

"What's that he says?" I asked, haughtily.

The officer saluted with his free hand.

"Says you gave him this 'ere packet of dope," he announced. "I'm afraid I'll have to trouble you for your name and address, sir."

Once more I saw Vine Street looming before me. But there was no time for hedging.

"That's all right, officer," I said. "Smithson's my name. The Wanderers' Club. I'm sorry I haven't got a card on me."

"And 'ave you ever seen this man before?" he asked, dangling his prisoner at me by the scruff of the neck.

"Yes," I said, remembering that our whole interview must have been witnessed. "He came up and spoke to me just now, and for a second I mistook him for a friend. But I discovered at once that I was wrong."

"And you didn't give him nothing?"

"On the contrary," I said. "He gave me a very vicious kick. But I think he's in safe hands now, eh?"

Strangled noises were coming from the prisoner's throat, but the detective paid no attention to them.

"Quite safe, sir," he chuckled, gruffly. "I don't suppose we'll have to trouble you about this again."

"I'm very glad to hear it," I said, truthfully.

"I've got all the evidence I want in this little envelope," explained the plain-clothes man. "We've been after him the best part of a week, but we've got him properly now. Smithson, did you say, sir? Thank you, sir. Good night to you, sir."

I watched them marching off together, their back view presenting a very deceitful picture of the friendliness of their relations, and then, once again, I turned up towards Piccadilly. It struck me that what with the Chinaman, the conspirator, and Mr. Smithson, of the Wanderers' Club, the detective force at Vine Street would find themselves presented with as pretty a problem as any that could have come their way for quite a considerable time. Yet it also occurred to me that it might be a good thing if I hurried on certain plans which I had at this time for paying a visit of some months to the Continent.

MEANWHILE, I was becoming increasingly aware of a painful stiffness in the leg which had been subjected to the double strain of my leap from the moving taxi-cab and of the alleged dope-fiend's attack. By the time I reached the corner of my own street I really could hardly walk; and between this corner and the door of my flat I should think that I must have stopped nearly a dozen times, while I clutched at the railings and relieved myself with a selection of groans and curses. But at length I dragged myself up my stairs and, taking out my latchkey, opened my own front door.

As I did so I had a strange impression of a brief flash of light through the door of my sitting-room. It was gone as quickly as it had appeared, but as mine was a service flat, into which no one with any business to do so could be expected to enter for another six or seven hours, I raised my voice and called out.

"Hallo!" I said. "Is anyone there?"

Dead silence greeted this inquiry. After all, I thought, perhaps I imagined it, or perhaps it was a light from some vehicle in the street shining for a moment through the window. I slipped off my overcoat, dropped my hat on to a chair, and, crossing the hall, switched on the light in my bathroom.

At this point the telephone bell in the sitting-room suddenly began to peal.

"Oh, curse the thing!" I muttered, and once again I limped out into the hall. Who on earth, I wondered, could want to ring me up at nearly one in the morning? Another of those infernal wrong numbers, most likely.

I put my hand on the switch just inside the sitting-room door and turned on the light. The next moment both my arms had shot up in the air, in obedience to an irresistibly worded command. Standing in the middle of the room was a seedy-looking man with an uncommonly dirty face, and in his right hand, which was directed unwaveringly towards my waistcoat, was a horrible little black automatic pistol.

"And keep 'em up," added this alarming vision, taking a step towards me.

"This," I thought, "is quite unmistakably my unlucky evening. I wonder what happens next?" But I said nothing; I only reflected on the extreme annoyance which it would cause me should that automatic pistol accidentally go off.

"Nah, then," said the seedy-looking man. "Wot are *you* doing 'ere?"

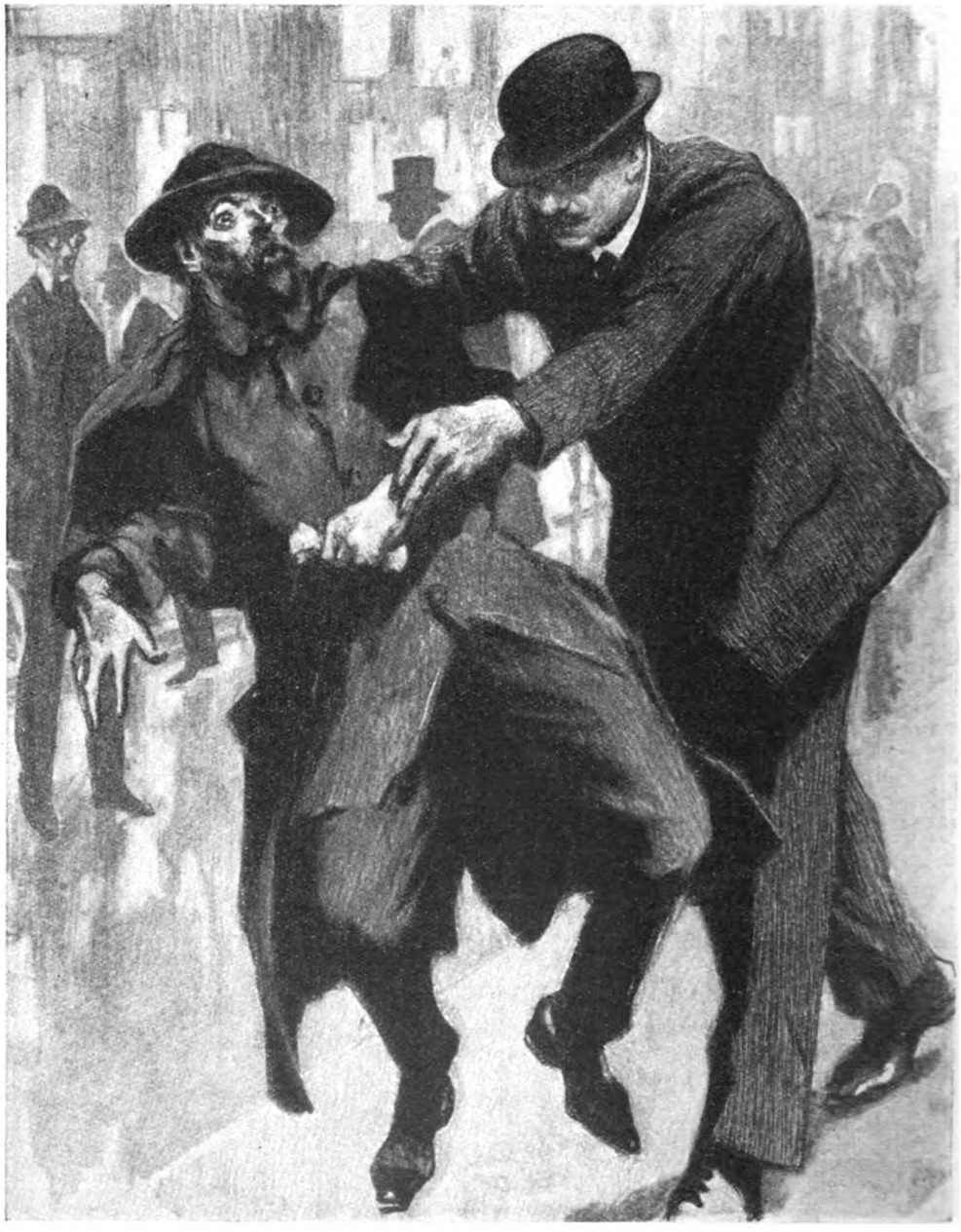
But for the presence of that pistol, my retort would have been obvious. For the moment, however, the *tu quoque* struck me as a very much overrated form of repartee.

"Dash it all!" I protested. "This is my flat."

"*Wot?*" said the seedy-looking man. "But you're not the Honourable Wokingham?"

"Blimey!" exclaimed the seedy-looking man. "I've been and cracked the wrong crib!"

All this time the telephone bell had con-



Nothing exasperates me more than the misuse by the lower orders of courtesy titles.

"*Mr.* Wokingham," I said, with great emphasis, "lives upstairs."

tinued to ring, but at this point it stopped abruptly, and with the cessation of sound a sudden idea came flashing into my mind. Did *bonâ-fide* burglars, I asked myself, ever really say "Blimey"? Wasn't there some-

thing a little stagey about that reference to cracking a crib? And what was more, didn't John Freemantle know perfectly well that I lived in the same block of flats

I saw a vast figure step out from the darkness of a shop and lift him clean off his feet.

as Fred Wokingham? I dropped my hands and opened my mouth.

"Hallo, John!" I said. "You nearly——"

Bang! went the automatic pistol; there was a shivering of glass just to the right of my head, where "The Monarch of the Glen" hung; and my arms went up again like a jack-in-the-box.

"Look out, you fool——" I began, but my words were cut short at once.

"You blooming well do wot you're told," said the intruder. "And don't you start calling me names. I sha'n't miss you next time. See?"

I saw only too well that that unlucky wager had landed me for the third time that night in a hideous misunderstanding, and that on this occasion it had nearly cost me my life. But what could I do, except continue to stand there on my aching leg, with my arms becoming stiffer and more uncomfortable every second?

Meanwhile in the burglar's countenance there appeared a convulsive spasm, which seemed to register the birth of a fresh thought.

"Look 'ere," he said, again taking a step towards me. "'Oo told you as I was called 'John,' eh?"

I tried to laugh.

"Nobody," I said. "At least, it's no use trying to explain. You wouldn't believe me if I told you."

"No," said the burglar, with the utmost vehemence, "I would *not*. And do you know why, mister blinking boiled-shirt? Cos, if you arst me, you ain't got no more business in this flat than wot I 'aven't. Tried to kid me I'd come to the wrong address, did yer? D'yer think I don't see your little game?"

I could only gape at these mysterious suggestions.

"Ho, yuss," added the burglar, his eyes now rolling with fury and the muzzle of his automatic wobbling wildly all over my person. "D'yer think I'm such a mug I don't see wot you're after? Why, you ruddy swell, I 'eard that limp of yours the minute you come inside the door. Gentleman Jenkins of Portland Jail, that's your number. But I'll learn yer to come 'ere, doing an honest cove out of a job. Them Wokingham sparklers is mine, d'yer see? And when I've got 'em, I'm going to leave you 'ere for the cops. Nah, then, wot abaht it?"

"I assure you——" I began expostulating, and at these words the telephone bell started ringing again. Without thinking, I made a movement towards it, but I was stopped at once by a yell of rage.

"None of that," barked my visitor. "You stay where you are. I'll attend to this for yer." And still covering me with his pistol, he crossed to my writing-table and lifted the receiver from the instrument.

"'Ullo," he said; and the next moment he had dropped the receiver like a hot coal and clapped his hand over the mouthpiece.

"'Ere; wot's the game?" he asked, a look of terror spreading over his really uncommonly dirty face.

"Game?" I repeated, completely mystified.

"'Ere's Vine Street on the line,' he croaked. "Asking for a Mr. Gibson. Is this another of your little tricks, or—or wot is it?"

"Vine Street!" I gasped. This was the last straw. By some appalling and inexplicable accident my identity must have been discovered by one of those two police-

officers, and if ever I escaped from the present horrible situation I saw that it would only be to find myself in the dock—charged with Heaven alone knew what. Forgetting everything else, I dashed towards the telephone.

"Let me speak to them," I shouted.

"It's a plant!" shrieked the burglar. "Keep back, you fool, or, by gum, I'll——"

Crack! went the pistol again, but without waiting to see if I were dead or alive I flung myself on to him. There was a brief but violent struggle, another explosion from the automatic, a reeking, stifling smell of gunpowder and whisky, and then, with a sudden, sickening vision of a million brightly-coloured stars, the whole world went roaring away from me into a black mist.

WHEN I came to myself (Gibson proceeded, after pausing for a moment to let the effect of this brilliant piece of description sink in), I found that I was lying in my bed. I was aching all over in every portion of my body, but nowhere more violently than in my head, which, as I could tell without attempting the impossible feat of moving my hands, was heavily bandaged. Presently there was a sound of the door opening and the service-valet came in.

"Pull down the blind, for Heaven's sake," I groaned. "And tell me, how many bullet holes have I got in me?"

"None, sir," said the valet. "Only that crack on the head, sir. And the doctor says you'll soon get over that. I'm afraid he got right away, though, sir."

"The doctor, do you mean?" I asked, wearily.

"No, sir; the burglar. But I can't find as he's taken anything. Only smashed up your sitting-room a bit. Would you like some breakfast, sir?"

"No," I said, shuddering.

The vision of the valet faded away, and I passed off into an uncomfortable mixture of sleep and unconsciousness, with an intermittent nightmare of police and handcuffs. After what might have been minutes or months—I had no idea which—I heard the door opening again.

"Get out," I said.

"I say," answered a voice, "I'm awfully sorry about this, old chap. I——"

I opened my eyes. For a moment I thought I was seeing my own ghost. A figure with its arm in a sling and its face heavily decorated with sticking-plaster was standing at the foot of the bed. Then I suddenly recognized it.

"Well," I said, "I can't say that in the circumstances I think your disguise is in very good taste. But you've lost your bet, old man. I know who you are perfectly well."

"Bet!" shouted John Freemantle, while a sharp stab of agony made me gasp for breath. "I've come to tell you that infernal bet is off. I wish to Heaven I'd never been such a thundering ass as to take it on!"

"What!" I exclaimed, trying to sit up, and falling back with another groan. "Well, you don't wish it any more than I do. But what's made you change your mind?"

"I thought it would be a jolly good idea," said John, "to dress up as a woman and come round here last night and see if you'd let me into the flat."

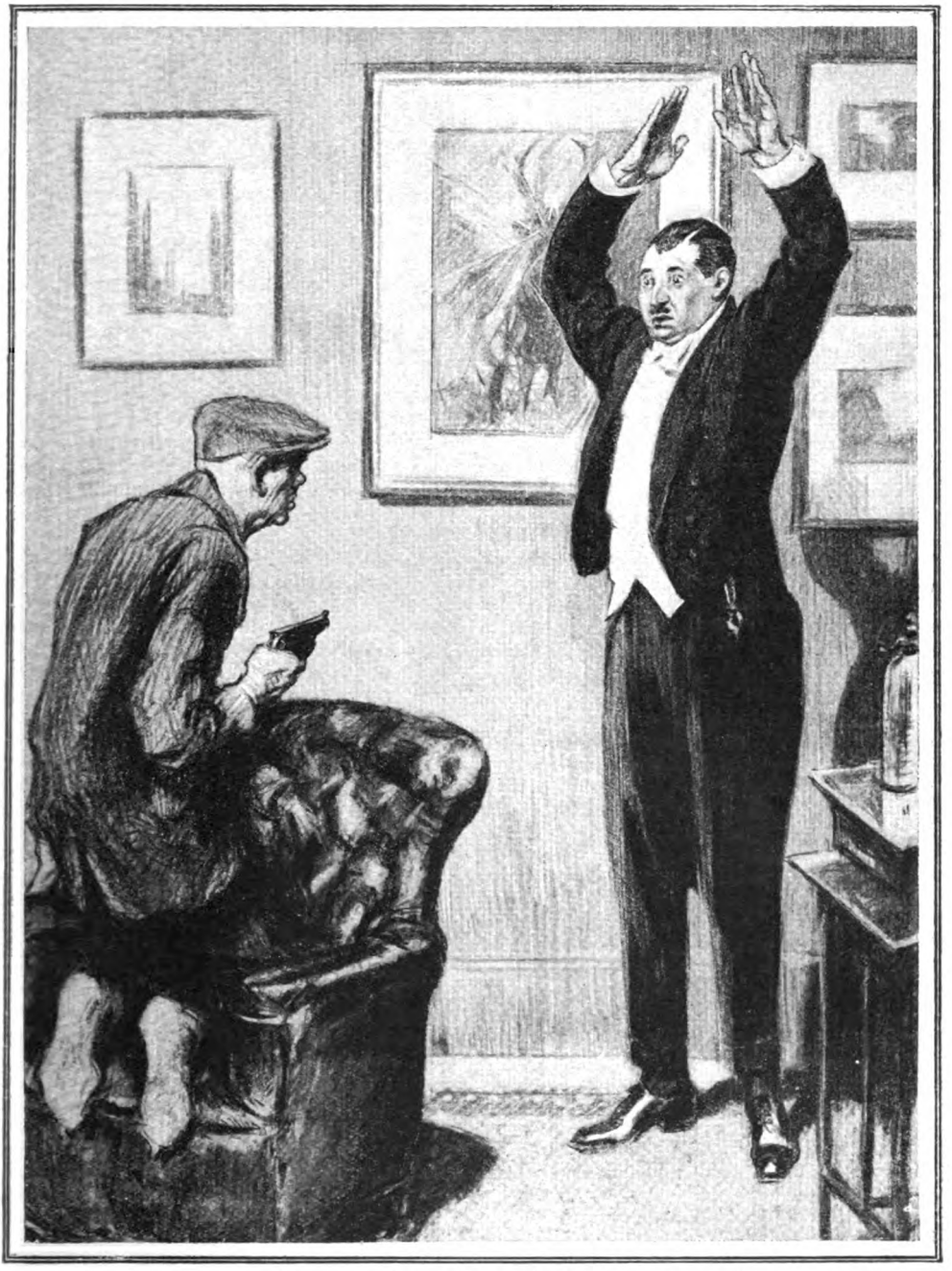
"Did you?" I asked, shutting my eyes again.

"Yes," said John Freemantle. "I borrowed some things from a girl I met at the Savoy, and I had a wig that I'd bought when I played Mercutio at Blackpool. Bobbed hair, you know. I dare say it would have been all right if I'd come round in a cab; but, like a silly idiot, I thought it would be fun to walk. I only got half-way up the Haymarket, when I saw that I was being followed by a policeman. I tried to dodge him, but it was no use. Then I got the wind up and started to run, but with those infernal skirts round my legs I hadn't a dog's chance. He caught me in a blind alley off Jermyn Street, and though I put up a bit of a fight, the brute got me down with some kind of jiu-jitsu. He dragged me off to Vine Street, with a crowd of beastly people jeering at me all the way and my face bleeding like a butcher's shop where I'd hit the pavement. I did my best to explain that it was only a joke and that I was doing it for a bet; I even got the inspector to try and ring up your flat, because I thought you might back me up or bail me out; but he couldn't get any answer."

"No," I said. "That's quite right. He couldn't."

"Well," continued John, "I spent the night in the cells, and this morning I was had up before the beak and charged with masquerading in female costume and assaulting a police-constable in the execution of his duty. I suppose I was dashed lucky to get off with a fine—the beak said I was, anyhow. And I had the sense to give them my real name, so it won't hurt me professionally if it gets in the papers. But look here, old chap," he added. "What I really came round for was to pay you that tenner. You win all right, because I'm not going on. I've had about enough of it. But if it hadn't been for that infernal policeman, I'd have shown you something."

"Keep your filthy lucre," I replied. "I'm not going to make my living out of blood-money. Moreover," I added, impressively,



"You blooming well do wot you're told. And don't you start calling me names. I sha'n't miss you next time. See?"

" little as you may know it, you have already shown me all and more than I could ever possibly wish to see."

And with these words I turned my face to the wall and burst into a horrible peal of hideous laughter.

UKRIDGE, TEDDY WEEKS AND THE TOMATO

by

P. G. WODEHOUSE

ILLUSTRATED BY REGINALD CLEAVER

"HALF a minute, laddie," said Ukridge. And, gripping my arm, he brought me to a halt on the outskirts of the little crowd which had collected about the church door.

It was a crowd such as may be seen any morning during the London mating-season outside any of the churches which nestle in the quiet squares between Hyde Park and the King's Road, Chelsea.

It consisted of five women of cook-like aspect, four nursemaids, half-a-dozen men of the non-producing class who had torn themselves away for the moment from their normal task of propping up the wall of the Bunch of Grapes public-house on the corner, a costermonger with a barrow of vegetables, divers small boys, eleven dogs, and two or three purposeful-looking young fellows with cameras slung over their shoulders. It was plain that a wedding was in progress—and, arguing from the presence of the camera-men and the line of smart motor-cars along the kerb, a fairly fashionable wedding. What was not plain—to me—was why Ukridge, sternest of bachelors, had desired to add himself to the spectators.

"What," I inquired, "is the thought behind this? Why are we interrupting our walk to attend the obsequies of some perfect stranger?"

Ukridge did not reply for a moment. He seemed plunged in thought. Then he uttered a hollow, mirthless laugh—a dreadful sound like the last gargle of a dying moose.

"Perfect stranger my number eleven foot!" he responded, in his coarse way. "Do you know who it is who's getting hitched up in there?"

"Who?"

"Teddy Weeks."

"Teddy Weeks? Teddy Weeks? Good Lord!" I exclaimed. "Not really?"

And five years rolled away.

IT was at Barolini's Italian restaurant in Beak Street that Ukridge evolved his great scheme. Barolini's was a favourite resort of our little group of earnest strugglers in the days when the philanthropic restaurateurs of Soho used to supply four courses and coffee for a shilling and sixpence: and there were present that night, besides Ukridge and myself, the following men-about-town: Teddy Weeks, the actor, fresh from a six-weeks' tour with the Number Three "Only a Shop-Girl" Company; Victor Beamish, the artist, the man who drew that picture of the O-So-Eesi Piano-Player in the advertisement pages of the *Piccadilly Magazine;* Bertram Fox, author of "Ashes of Remorse," and other unproduced motion-picture scenarios; and Robert Dunhill, who, being employed at a salary of eighty pounds per annum by the New Asiatic Bank, represented the sober, hard-headed commercial element. As usual, Teddy Weeks had collared the conversation, and was telling us once again how good he was and how hardly treated by a malignant fate.

There is no need to describe Teddy Weeks. Under another and a more euphonious name he has long since made his personal appearance dreadfully familiar to all who read the illustrated weekly papers. He was then, as now, a sickeningly handsome young man, possessing precisely the same melting eyes, mobile mouth, and corrugated hair so esteemed by the theatre-going public to-day. And yet, at this period of his career he was wasting himself on minor touring companies of the kind which open at Barrow-in-Furness and jump to Bootle for the second half of the week. He attributed

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this, as Ukridge was so apt to attribute his own difficulties, to lack of capital.

"I have everything," he said, querulously, emphasizing his remarks with a coffee-spoon. "Looks, talent, personality, a beautiful speaking-voice—everything. All I need is a chance. And I can't get that because I have no clothes fit to wear. These managers are all the same, they never look below the surface, they never bother to find out if a man has genius. All they go by are his clothes. If I could afford to buy a couple of suits from a Cork Street tailor, if I could have my boots made to order by Moykoff instead of getting them ready-made and second-hand at Moses Brothers', if I could once contrive to own a decent hat, a really good pair of spats, and a gold cigarette-case, all at the same time, I could walk into any manager's office in London and sign up for a West-end production to-morrow."

It was at this point that Freddie Lunt came in. Freddie, like Robert Dunhill, was a financial magnate in the making and an assiduous frequenter of Barolini's; and it suddenly occurred to us that a considerable time had passed since we had last seen him in the place. We inquired the reason for this aloofness.

"I've been in bed," said Freddie, "for over a fortnight."

The statement incurred Ukridge's stern disapproval. That great man made a practice of never rising before noon, and on one occasion, when a carelessly-thrown match had burned a hole in his only pair of trousers, had gone so far as to remain between the sheets for forty-eight hours; but sloth on so majestic a scale as this shocked him.

"Lazy young devil," he commented, severely. "Letting the golden hours of youth slip by like that when you ought to have been bustling about and making a name for yourself."

Freddie protested himself wronged by the imputation.

"I had an accident," he explained. "Fell off my bicycle and sprained an ankle."

"Tough luck," was our verdict.

"Oh, I don't know," said Freddie. "It wasn't bad fun getting a rest. And of course there was the fiver."

"What fiver?"

"I got a fiver from the *Weekly Cyclist* for getting my ankle sprained."

"You — *what?*" cried Ukridge, profoundly stirred—as ever—by a tale of easy money. "Do you mean to sit there and tell me that some dashed paper paid you five quid simply because you sprained your ankle? Pull yourself together, old horse. Things like that don't happen."

"It's quite true."

"Can you show me the fiver?"

"No; because if I did you would try to borrow it."

Ukridge ignored this slur in dignified silence.

"Would they pay a fiver to *anyone* who sprained his ankle?" he asked, sticking to the main point.

"Yes. If he was a subscriber."

"I knew there was a catch in it," said Ukridge, moodily.

"Lots of weekly papers are starting this wheeze," proceeded Freddie. "You pay a year's subscription and that entitles you to accident insurance."

We were interested. This was in the days

Ukridge brought me to a halt on the outskirts of the little crowd which had collected about the church door.

before every daily paper in London was competing madly against its rivals in the matter of insurance and offering princely bribes to the citizens to make a fortune by breaking their necks. Nowadays papers are paying as high as two thousand pounds for a genuine corpse and five pounds a week for a mere dislocated spine; but at that time the idea was new and it had an attractive appeal.

"How many of these rags are doing this?" asked Ukridge. You could tell from the gleam in his eyes that that great brain was whirring like a dynamo. "As many as ten?"

"Yes, I should think so. Quite ten."

"Then a fellow who subscribed to them all and then sprained his ankle would get fifty quid?" said Ukridge, reasoning acutely.

"More if the injury was more serious," said Freddie, the expert. "They have a regular tariff. So much for a broken arm, so much for a broken leg, and so forth."

Ukridge's collar leaped off its stud and his pince-nez wobbled drunkenly as he turned to us.

"How much money can you blokes raise?" he demanded.

"What do you want it for?" asked Robert Dunhill, with a banker's caution.

"My dear old horse, can't you see? Why, my gosh, I've got the idea of the century. Upon my Sam, this is the giltest-edged scheme that was ever hatched. We'll get together enough money and take out a year's subscription for every one of these dashed papers."

"What's the good of that?" said Dunhill, coldly unenthusiastic.

They train bank clerks to stifle emotion, so that they will be able to refuse overdrafts when they become managers. "The odds are we should none of us have an accident of any kind, and then the money would be chucked away."

"Good heavens, ass," snorted Ukridge, "you don't suppose I'm suggesting that we should leave it to chance, do you? Listen! Here's the scheme. We take out subscriptions for all these papers, then we draw lots, and the fellow who gets the fatal card or whatever it is goes out and breaks his leg and draws the loot, and we split it up between us and live on it in luxury. It ought to run into hundreds of pounds."

A long silence followed. Then Dunhill spoke again. His was a solid rather than a nimble mind.

"Suppose he couldn't break his leg?"

"My gosh!" cried Ukridge, exasperated. "Here we are in the twentieth century, with every resource of modern civilization at our disposal, with opportunities for getting our legs broken opening about us on every side—and you ask a silly question like that! Of course he could break his leg. Any ass can break a leg. It's a little hard! We're all infernally broke — personally, unless Freddie can lend me a bit of that fiver till Saturday, I'm going to have a difficult job pulling through. We all need money like the dickens, and yet, when I point out this marvellous scheme for collecting a bit, instead of fawning on me for my ready intelligence you sit and make objections. It isn't the right spirit. It isn't the spirit that wins."

"If you're as hard up as that," objected Dunhill, "how are you going to put in your share of the pool?"

A pained, almost a stunned, look came into Ukridge's eyes. He gazed at Dunhill through his lop-sided pince-nez as one who speculates as to whether his hearing has deceived him.

"Me?" he cried. "Me? I like that! Upon my Sam, that's rich! Why, damme, if there's any justice in the world, if there's a spark of decency and good feeling in your bally bosoms, I should think you would let me in free for suggesting the idea. It's a little hard! I supply the brains and you want me to cough up cash as well. My gosh, I didn't expect this. This hurts me, by George! If anybody had told me that an old pal would——"

"Oh, all right," said Robert Dunhill. "All right, all right, all right. But I'll tell you one thing. If you draw the lot it'd be the happiest day of my life."

"I sha'n't," said Ukridge. "Something tells me that I sha'n't."

Nor did he. When, in a solemn silence broken only by the sound of a distant waiter quarrelling with the cook down a speaking-tube, we had completed the drawing, the man of destiny was Teddy Weeks.

I SUPPOSE that even in the springtime of Youth, when broken limbs seem a lighter matter than they become later in life, it can never be an unmixedly agreeable thing to have to go out into the public highways and try to make an accident happen to one. In such circumstances the reflection that you are thereby benefiting your friends brings but slight balm. To Teddy Weeks it appeared to bring no balm at all. That he was experiencing a certain disinclination to sacrifice himself for the public good became more and more evident as the days went by and found him still intact. Ukridge, when he called upon me to discuss the matter, was visibly perturbed. He sank into a chair beside the table at which I was beginning my modest morning meal, and,

having drunk half my coffee, sighed deeply.

"Upon my Sam," he moaned, "it's a little disheartening. I strain my brain to think up schemes for getting us all a bit of money just at the moment when we are all needing it most, and when I hit on what is probably the simplest and yet ripest notion of our time, this blighter Weeks goes and lets me down by shirking his plain duty. It's just my luck that a fellow like that should have drawn the lot. And the worst of it is, laddie, that, now we've started with him, we've got to keep on. We can't possibly raise enough money to pay yearly subscriptions for anybody else. It's Weeks or nobody."

"I suppose we must give him time."

"That's what he says," grunted Ukridge, morosely, helping himself to toast. "He says he doesn't know how to start about it. To listen to him, you'd think that going and having a trifling accident was the sort of delicate and intricate job that required years of study and special preparation. Why, a child of six could do it on his head at five minutes' notice. The man's so infernally particular. You make helpful suggestions, and instead of accepting them in a broad, reasonable spirit of co-operation he comes back at you every time with some frivolous objection. He's so dashed fastidious. When we were out last night, we came on a couple of navvies scrapping. Good hefty fellows, either of them capable of putting him in hospital for a month. I told him to jump in and start separating them, and he said no; it was a private dispute which was none of his business, and he didn't feel justified in interfering. Finicky, I call it. I tell you, laddie, this blighter is a broken reed. He has got cold feet. We did wrong to let him into the drawing at all. We might have known that a fellow like that would never give results. No conscience. No sense of *esprit de corps*. No notion of putting himself out to the most trifling extent for the benefit of the community. Haven't you any more marmalade, laddie?"

"I have not."

"Then I'll be going," said Ukridge, moodily. "I suppose," he added, pausing at the door, "you couldn't lend me five bob?"

"How did you guess?"

"Then I'll tell you what," said Ukridge, ever fair and reasonable: "you can stand me dinner to-night." He seemed cheered up for the moment by this happy compromise, but gloom descended on him again. His face clouded. "When I think," he said, "of all the money that's locked up in that poor faint-hearted fish, just waiting to be released, I could sob. Sob, laddie, like a little child. I never liked that man—he has a bad eye and waves his hair. Never trust a man who waves his hair, old horse."

UKRIDGE'S pessimism was not confined to himself. By the end of a fortnight, nothing having happened to Teddy Weeks worse than a slight cold which he shook off in a couple of days, the general consensus of opinion among his apprehensive colleagues in the Syndicate was that the situation had become desperate. There were no signs whatever of any return on the vast capital which we had laid out, and meanwhile meals had to be bought, landladies paid, and a reasonable supply of tobacco acquired. It was a melancholy task in these circumstances to read one's paper of a morning.

All over the inhabited globe, so the well-informed sheet gave one to understand, every kind of accident was happening every day to practically everybody in existence except Teddy Weeks. Farmers in Minnesota were getting mixed up with reaping-machines, peasants in India were being bisected by crocodiles; iron girders from skyscrapers were falling hourly on the heads of citizens in every town from Philadelphia to San Francisco; and the only people who were not down with ptomaine poisoning were those who had walked over cliffs, driven motors into walls, tripped over manholes, or assumed on too slight evidence that the gun was not loaded. In a crippled world, it seemed, Teddy Weeks walked alone, whole and glowing with health. It was one of those grim, ironical, hopeless, grey, despairful situations which the Russian novelists love to write about, and I could not find it in me to blame Ukridge for taking direct action in this crisis. My only regret was that bad luck caused so excellent a plan to miscarry.

My first intimation that he had been trying to hurry matters on came when he and I were walking along the King's Road one evening, and he drew me into Markham Square, a dismal backwater where he had once had rooms.

"What's the idea?" I asked, for I disliked the place.

"Teddy Weeks lives here," said Ukridge. "In my old rooms." I could not see that this lent any fascination to the place. Every day and in every way I was feeling sorrier and sorrier that I had been foolish enough to put money which I could ill spare into a venture which had all the earmarks of a wash-out, and my sentiments towards Teddy Weeks were cold and hostile.

"I want to inquire after him."

"Inquire after him? Why?"

"Well, the fact is, laddie, I have an idea that he has been bitten by a dog."

"What makes you think that?"

"Oh, I don't know," said Ukridge, dreamily. "I've just got the idea. You know how one gets ideas."

The mere contemplation of this beautiful event was so inspiring that for a while it held me silent. In each of the ten journals in which we had invested dog-bites were specifically recommended as things which every subscriber ought to have. They came about half-way up the list of lucrative accidents, inferior to a broken rib or a fractured fibula, but better value than an ingrowing toe-nail. I was gloating happily over the picture conjured up by Ukridge's words, when an exclamation brought me back with a start to the realities of life. A revolting sight met my eyes. Down the street came ambling the familiar figure of Teddy Weeks, and one glance at his elegant person was enough to tell us that our hopes had been built on sand. Not even a toy Pomeranian had chewed this man.

"Hullo, you fellows!" said Teddy Weeks.

"Hullo!" we responded, dully.

"Can't stop," said Teddy Weeks. "I've got to fetch a doctor."

"A doctor?"

"Yes. Poor Victor Beamish. He's been bitten by a dog."

Ukridge and I exchanged weary glances. It seemed as if Fate was going out of its way to have sport with us. What was the good of a dog biting Victor Beamish? What was the good of a hundred dogs biting Victor Beamish? A dog-bitten Victor Beamish had no market value whatever.

"You know that fierce brute that belongs to my landlady," said Teddy Weeks. "The one that always dashes out into the area and barks at people who come to the front door." I remembered. A large mongrel with wild eyes and flashing fangs, badly in need of a haircut. I had encountered it once in the street, when visiting Ukridge, and only the presence of the latter, who knew it well and to whom all dogs were as brothers, had saved me from the doom of Victor Beamish. "Somehow or other he got into my bedroom this evening. He was waiting there when I came home. I had brought Beamish back with me, and the animal pinned him by the leg the moment I opened the door."

"Why didn't he pin you?" asked Ukridge, aggrieved.

"What I can't make out," said Teddy Weeks, "is how on earth the brute came to be in my room. Somebody must have put him there. The whole thing is very mysterious."

"Why didn't he pin you?" demanded Ukridge again.

"Oh, I managed to climb on to the top of the wardrobe while he was biting Beamish," said Teddy Weeks. "And then the landlady came and took him away. But I can't stop here talking. I must go and get that doctor."

WE gazed after him in silence as he tripped down the street. We noted the careful manner in which he paused at the corner to eye the traffic before crossing the road, the wary way in which he drew back to allow a truck to rattle past.

"You heard that?" said Ukridge, tensely. "He climbed on to the top of the wardrobe!"

"Yes."

"And you saw the way he dodged that excellent truck?"

"Yes."

"Something's got to be done," said Ukridge, firmly. "The man has got to be awakened to a sense of his responsibilities."

Next day a deputation waited on Teddy Weeks.

Ukridge was our spokesman, and he came to the point with admirable directness.

"How about it?" asked Ukridge.

"How about what?" replied Teddy Weeks, nervously, avoiding his accusing eye.

"When do we get action?"

"Oh, you mean that accident business?"

"Yes."

"I've been thinking about that," said Teddy Weeks.

Ukridge drew the mackintosh which he wore indoors and out of doors and in all weathers more closely around him. There was in the action something suggestive of a member of the Roman Senate about to denounce an enemy of the State. In just such a manner must Cicero have swished his toga as he took a deep breath preparatory to assailing Clodius. He toyed for a moment with the ginger-beer wire which held his pince-nez in place, and endeavoured without success to button his collar at the back. In moments of emotion Ukridge's collar always took on a sort of temperamental jumpiness which no stud could restrain.

"And about time you *were* thinking about it," he boomed, sternly.

We shifted appreciatively in our seats, all except Victor Beamish, who had declined a chair and was standing by the mantelpiece. "Upon my Sam, it's about time you were thinking about it. Do you realize that we've invested an enormous sum of money in you on the distinct understanding that we could rely on you to do your duty and get immediate

One glance at Teddy's elegant person was enough to tell us that our hopes had been built on sand.

results? Are we to be forced to the conclusion that you are so yellow and few in the pod as to want to evade your honourable obligations? We thought better of you, Weeks. Upon my Sam, we thought better of you. We took you for a two-fisted, enterprising, big-souled, one-hundred-per-cent. he-man who would stand by his friends to the finish."

"Yes, but—"

"Any bloke with a sense of loyalty and an appreciation of what it meant to the rest of us would have rushed out and found some means of fulfilling his duty long ago. You don't even grasp at the opportunities that come your way. Only yesterday I saw you draw back when a single step into the road would have had a truck bumping into you."

"Well, it's not so easy to let a truck bump into you."

"Nonsense. It only requires a little ordinary resolution. Use your imagination, man. Try to think that a child has fallen down in the street—a little golden-haired child," said Ukridge, deeply affected. "And a dashed great cab or something comes rolling up. The kid's mother is standing on the pavement, helpless, her hands clasped in agony. 'Dammit,' she cries, 'will no one save my darling?' 'Yes, by George,' you shout, '*I* will.' And out you jump and the thing's over in half a second. I don't know what you're making such a fuss about."

"Yes, but——" said Teddy Weeks.

"I'm told, what's more, it isn't a bit painful. A sort of dull shock, that's all."

'Who told you that?"

"I forget. Someone."

"Well, you can tell him from me that he's an ass," said Teddy Weeks, with asperity.

"All right. If you object to being run over by a truck there are lots of other ways. But, upon my Sam, it's pretty hopeless suggesting them. You seem to have no enterprise at all. Yesterday, after I went to all the trouble to put a dog in your room, a dog which would have done all the work for you—all that you had to do was stand still and let him use his own judgment—what happened? You climbed on to——"

Victor Beamish interrupted, speaking in a voice husky with emotion.

"Was it you who put that damned dog in the room?"

"Eh?" said Ukridge. "Why, yes. But we can have a good talk about all that later on," he proceeded, hastily. "The point at the moment is how the dickens we're going to persuade this poor worm to collect our

insurance money for us. Why, damme, I should have thought you would have——"

"All I can say——" began Victor Beamish, heatedly.

"Yes, yes," said Ukridge; "some other time. Must stick to business now, laddie. I was saying," he resumed, "that I should have thought you would have been as keen as mustard to put the job through for your own sake. You're always beefing that you haven't any clothes to impress managers with. Think of all you can buy with your share of the swag once you have summoned up a little ordinary determination and seen the thing through. Think of the suits, the boots, the hats, the spats. You're always talking about your dashed career, and how all you need to land you in a West-end production is good clothes. Well, here's your chance to get them."

His eloquence was not wasted. A wistful look came into Teddy Weeks's eye, such a look as must have come into the eye of Moses on the summit of Pisgah. He breathed heavily. You could see that the man was mentally walking along Cork Street, weighing the merits of one famous tailor against another.

"I'll tell you what I'll do," he said, suddenly. "It's no use asking me to put this thing through in cold blood. I simply can't do it. I haven't the nerve. But if you fellows will give me a dinner to-night with lots of champagne I think it will key me up to it."

A heavy silence fell upon the room. Champagne! The word was like a knell.

"How on earth are we going to afford champagne?" said Victor Beamish.

"Well, there it is," said Teddy Weeks. "Take it or leave it."

"Gentlemen," said Ukridge, "it would seem that the company requires more capital. How about it, old horses? Let's get together in a frank, business-like, cards-on-the-table spirit and see what can be done. I can raise ten bob."

"What!" cried the entire assembled company, amazed. "How?"

"I'll pawn a banjo."

"You haven't got a banjo."

"No, but George Tupper has, and I know where he keeps it."

Started in this spirited way, the subscriptions came pouring in. I contributed a cigarette-case, Bertram Fox thought his landlady would let him owe for another week, Robert Dunhill had an uncle in Kensington who, he fancied, if tactfully approached would be good for a quid, and Victor Beamish said that if the advertisement-manager of the O-So-Eesi Piano-Player was churlish enough to refuse an advance of five shillings against future work he misjudged him sadly. Within a few minutes, in short, the Lightning Drive had produced the impressive total of two pounds six shillings, and we asked Teddy Weeks if he thought that he could get adequately keyed up within the limits of that sum.

"I'll try," said Teddy Weeks.

So, not unmindful of the fact that that excellent hostelry supplied champagne at eight shillings the quart bottle, we fixed the meeting for seven o'clock at Barolini's.

CONSIDERED as a social affair, Teddy Weeks's keying-up dinner was not a success. Almost from the start I think we all found it trying. It was not so much the fact that he was drinking deeply of Barolini's eight-shilling champagne while we, from lack of funds, were compelled to confine ourselves to meaner beverages; what really marred the pleasantness of the function was the extraordinary effect the stuff had on Teddy. What was actually in the champagne supplied to Barolini and purveyed by him to the public, such as were reckless enough to drink it, at eight shillings the bottle remains a secret between its maker and his Maker; but three glasses of it were enough to convert Teddy Weeks from a mild and rather oily young man into a truculent swashbuckler.

He quarrelled with us all. With the soup he was tilting at Victor Beamish's theories of Art; the fish found him ridiculing Bertram Fox's views on the future of the motion-picture; and by the time the leg of chicken with dandelion salad arrived—or, as some held, string salad—opinions varied on this point—the hell-brew had so wrought on him that he had begun to lecture Ukridge on his mis-spent life and was urging him in accents audible across the street to go out and get a job and thus acquire sufficient self-respect to enable him to look himself in the face in a mirror without wincing. Not, added Teddy Weeks with what we all thought uncalled-for offensiveness, that any amount of self-respect was likely to do that. Having said which, he called imperiously for another eight bob's-worth.

We gazed at one another wanly. However excellent the end towards which all this was tending, there was no denying that it was hard to bear. But policy kept us silent. We recognized that this was Teddy Weeks's evening and that he must be humoured. Victor Beamish said meekly that Teddy had cleared up a lot of points which had been troubling him for a long time. Bertram Fox agreed that there was much in what Teddy had said about the future of the close-up. And even Ukridge, though his haughty soul was seared to its foundations by the latter's personal remarks, promised to take his homily to heart

and act upon it at the earliest possible moment.

"You'd better!" said Teddy Weeks, belligerently, biting off the end of one of Barolini's best cigars. "And there's another thing—don't let me hear of your coming and sneaking people's socks again."

"Very well, laddie," said Ukridge, humbly.

"If there is one person in the world that I despise," said Teddy, bending a red-eyed gaze on the offender, "it's a snock-seeker—a seek-snocker—a—well, you know what I mean."

We hastened to assure him that we knew what he meant, and he relapsed into a lengthy stupor, from which he emerged three-quarters of an hour later to announce that he didn't know what we intended to do, but that he was going. We said that we were going too, and we paid the bill and did so.

Teddy Weeks's indignation on discovering us gathered about him upon the pavement outside the restaurant was intense, and he expressed it freely. Among other things, he said—which was not true—that he had a reputation to keep up in Soho.

"It's all right, Teddy, old horse," said Ukridge, soothingly. "We just thought you would like to have all your old pals round you when you did it."

"Did it? Did what?"

"Why, had the accident."

Teddy Weeks glared at him truculently. Then his mood seemed to change abruptly, and he burst into a loud and hearty laugh.

"Well, of all the silly ideas!" he cried, amusedly. "I'm not going to have an accident. You don't suppose I ever seriously intended to have an accident, do you? It was just my fun." Then, with another sudden change of mood, he seemed to become a victim to an acute unhappiness. He stroked Ukridge's arm affectionately, and a tear rolled down his cheek. "Just my fun," he repeated. "You don't mind my fun, do you?" he asked, pleadingly. "You like my fun, don't you? All my fun. Never meant to have an accident at all. Just wanted dinner." The gay humour of it all overcame his sorrow once more. "Funniest thing ever heard," he said, cordially. "Didn't want accident, wanted dinner. Dinner daxident, danner dixident," he added, driving home his point. "Well, good night all," he said, cheerily. And, stepping off the kerb on to a banana-skin, was instantly knocked ten feet by a passing lorry.

"I managed to climb on to the top of the wardrobe while he was biting Beamish."

"TWO ribs and an arm," said the doctor five minutes later, superintending the removal proceedings. "Gently with that stretcher."

IT was two weeks before we were informed by the authorities of Charing Cross Hospital that the patient was in a condition to receive visitors. A whip-round secured the price of a basket of fruit, and Ukridge and I were deputed by the shareholders to deliver it with their compliments and kind inquiries.

"Hullo!" we said in a hushed, bedside manner when finally admitted to his presence.

"Sit down, gentlemen," replied the invalid.

I must confess even in that first moment to having experienced a slight feeling of surprise. It was not like Teddy Weeks to call us gentlemen. Ukridge, however, seemed to notice nothing amiss.

"Well, well, well," he said, buoyantly. "And how are you, laddie? We've brought you a few fragments of fruit."

"I am getting along capitally," replied Teddy Weeks, still in that odd precise way which had made his opening words strike me as curious. "And I should like to say that in my opinion England has reason to be proud of the alertness and enterprise of her great journals. The excellence of their reading-matter, the ingenuity of their various competitions, and, above all, the go-ahead spirit which has resulted in this accident insurance scheme are beyond praise. Have you got that down?" he inquired.

Ukridge and I looked at each other.

We had been told that Teddy was practically normal again, but this sounded like delirium.

"Have we got that down, old horse?" asked Ukridge, gently.

Teddy Weeks seemed surprised.

"Aren't you reporters?"

"How do you mean, reporters?"

"I thought you had come from one of these weekly papers that have been paying me insurance money, to interview me," said Teddy Weeks.

Ukridge and I exchanged another glance. An uneasy glance this time. I think that already a grim foreboding had begun to cast its shadow over us.

"Surely you remember me, Teddy, old horse?" said Ukridge, anxiously.

Teddy Weeks knit his brow, concentrating painfully.

"Why, of course," he said at last. "You're Ukridge, aren't you?"

"That's right. Ukridge."

"Of course. Ukridge."

"Yes. Ukridge. Funny your forgetting me!"

"Yes," said Teddy Weeks. "It's the effect of the shock I got when that thing bowled me over. I must have been struck on the head, I suppose. It has had the effect of rendering my memory rather uncertain. The doctors here are very interested. They say it is a most unusual case. I can remember some things perfectly, but in some ways my memory is a complete blank."

"Oh, but I say, old horse," quavered Ukridge. "I suppose you haven't forgotten about that insurance, have you?"

"Oh, no, I remember that."

Ukridge breathed a relieved sigh.

"I was a subscriber to a number of weekly papers," went on Teddy Weeks. "They are paying me insurance money now."

"Yes, yes, old horse," cried Ukridge. "But what I mean is you remember the Syndicate, don't you?"

Teddy Weeks raised his eyebrows.

"Syndicate? What Syndicate?"

"Why, when we all got together and put up the money to pay for the subscriptions to these papers, and drew lots to choose which of us should go out and have an accident and collect the money. And you drew it, don't you remember?"

Utter astonishment, and a shocked astonishment at that, spread itself over Teddy Weeks's countenance. The man seemed outraged.

"I certainly remember nothing of the kind," he said, severely. "I cannot imagine myself for a moment consenting to become a party to what from your own account would appear to have been a criminal conspiracy to obtain money under false pretences from a number of weekly papers."

"But, laddie——"

"However," said Teddy Weeks, "if there is any truth in this story, no doubt you have documentary evidence to support it."

Ukridge looked at me. I looked at Ukridge. There was a long silence.

"Shift-ho, old horse?" said Ukridge, sadly. "No use staying on here."

"No," I replied, with equal gloom. "May as well go."

"Glad to have seen you," said Teddy Weeks, "and thanks for the fruit."

The next time I saw the man he was coming out of a manager's office in the Haymarket. He had on a new Homburg hat of a delicate pearl grey, spats to match, and a new blue flannel suit, beautifully cut, with an invisible red twill. He was looking jubilant, and, as I passed him, he drew from his pocket a gold cigarette-case.

It was shortly after that, if you remember, that he made a big hit as the juvenile lead in that piece at the Apollo and started on his sensational career as a *matinée* idol.

* * * *

INSIDE the church the organ had swelled into the familiar music of the Wedding March. A verger came out and opened the doors. The five cooks ceased their reminiscences of other and smarter weddings at which they had participated. The camera-men unshipped their cameras. The costermonger moved his barrow of vegetables a pace forward. A dishevelled and unshaven man at my side uttered a disapproving growl.

"Idle rich!" said the dishevelled man.

Out of the church came a beauteous being, leading attached to his arm another being, somewhat less beauteous.

There was no denying the spectacular effect of Teddy Weeks. He was handsomer than ever. His sleek hair, gorgeously waved, shone in the sun, his eyes were large and bright; his lissome frame, garbed in faultless morning-coat and trousers, was that of an Apollo. But his bride gave the impression that Teddy had married money. They paused in the doorway, and the camera-men became active and fussy.

"Have you got a shilling, laddie?" said Ukridge in a low, level voice.

"Why do you want a shilling?"

"Old horse," said Ukridge, tensely, "it is of the utmost vital importance that I have a shilling here and now."

I passed it over. Ukridge turned to the dishevelled man, and I perceived that he

Stepping off the kerb on to a banana-skin, Teddy was instantly knocked ten feet by a passing lorry.

Well and truly aimed, it burst like a shell full between Teddy Weeks's expressive eyes.

held in his hand a large rich tomato of juicy and over-ripe appearance.

"Would you like to earn a bob?" Ukridge said.

"Would I!" replied the dishevelled man.

Ukridge sank his voice to a hoarse whisper.

The camera-men had finished their preparations. Teddy Weeks, his head thrown back in that gallant way which has endeared him to so many female hearts, was exhibiting his celebrated teeth. The cooks, in undertones, were making adverse comments on the appearance of the bride.

"Now, please," said one of the camera-men.

Over the heads of the crowd, well and truly aimed, whizzed a large juicy tomato. It burst like a shell full between Teddy Weeks's expressive eyes, obliterating them in scarlet ruin. It spattered Teddy Weeks's collar, it dripped on Teddy Weeks's morning-coat. And the dishevelled man turned abruptly and raced off down the street.

Ukridge grasped my arm. There was a look of deep content in his eyes.

"Shift-ho?" said Ukridge.

Arm-in-arm, we strolled off in the pleasant June sunshine.

(Another story by P. G. Wodehouse will appear next month.)

Portraits in Pencil and Pen

BY

WALTER TITTLE

II.

ILLUSTRATED WITH DRAWINGS FROM LIFE, MADE AT SITTINGS SPECIALLY GIVEN TO THE ARTIST.

SIR OLIVER LODGE.

I ENTERED a room in a large building in Victoria Street in response to the bidding of a hearty voice and was confronted by a great oak tree of a man, with a head (I borrow the simile from a verbal one of Mr. Maurice Hewlett) like the dome of St. Paul's. I am tall, but I felt quite tiny in the presence of this huge man. He was drying some clothes before a fire, as the day was very wet, and, with a smile to which his twinkling eyes contributed most liberally, said that caution of this sort was one of the penalties of age. "You are young; you don't have to think about such things." Now it happens that I have been young for a length of time sufficient to find it pleasantly flattering to be mistaken for a mere youth, but a sense of honesty dictated that I confess my real age. The comfort that I craved was immediately forthcoming, as my punctilious admission brought from Sir Oliver Lodge a hearty laugh; he shook his head and said: "You are an old man!"

Sir Oliver bears a striking resemblance to the late Lord Salisbury. His deeply-hooded eyes reminded me, too, to a certain degree of a portrait of Bismarck by Lenbach. His head, like the rest of him, is massive, and has unusual length, the cranium being bald and high, and the huge jaw lengthened in effect by the white beard.

From childhood science has always had great interest and fascination for me; and here was an opportunity *par excellence* for a bit of a journey into the scientific fairy-land. So as I made my sketch of this wonderful man I plied him with questions, with the result that I had from him a most enlivening and instructive discourse on several subjects about which I was curious.

He told me about the new conception of the atom, new, at least, to me, and, I think, to the average layman, though the experiments that caused it began about thirty years ago. Science now believes it to be a complex organism with an almost infinite number of parts that vibrate in obedience to definite laws in a manner similar to that of our solar system. And these parts are not believed to be particles of dead matter, as the atom itself was formerly thought to be, but tiny impulses of energy called *electrons*, held in their places by bonds of attraction and repulsion that exist between them, as the planets keep their relation to the sun. This would make it appear that matter and substance as we have conceived them do not exist; that every solid thing is made merely of impulses of energy, and that we really exist in a world of phantoms. This conception has resulted from the discovery that the supposedly unchangeable *elements* are not unchangeable at all. Various elements have been changed into other elements by being confined in test tubes in a

gaseous state, and their atoms broken up by "bombardments" of radium, particles of which were exploded by electricity in the tube. This leads to the conclusion that all elements are made of atoms, all of which are constituted of the same identical electrons, but in varying numbers, to the atom, for each different element.

"Well, Sir Oliver," I said, "this is alchemy at last, is it not?"

"Yes, in principle. We have not been able to make gold, however. So far we have only reduced atoms of certain elements into other elements that have fewer electrons to the atom. Building up to elements whose atoms contain a greater number of electrons has not yet been achieved. The claims of the alchemists were made merely as a measure toward self-preservation. If they had confessed that they were investigating the laws of Nature, they would have been burned as sorcerers, or put to death in some horrible way as punishment for impudently trying to pry into secrets that the Almighty never intended that they should know. But if they said 'We will make gold of the baser metals,' the authorities responded with much enthusiasm, 'Excellent. A sane and laudable ambition. When you succeed, let us have some of it.'"

Sir Oliver was one of the pioneers in the above-mentioned discoveries, and also in the development of radio. I asked if he thought there was a possibility of a vast number of "tunings" being made available for practical use, with the result of supplanting the telephone and cable. He thought not, as interference will hardly be overcome unless the vibration numbers or "tunings" in use are rather far apart, thus limiting the scope. In the case of wires the difficulties from various kinds of interference are practically eliminated, and, in his opinion, they will always carry a great majority of the traffic in messages.

ASTRONOMY was another subject upon which he touched. He thought it doubtful that any other of our sun's planets are inhabited by human beings. I suggested that if conditions of heat, atmosphere, vegetation, and gravity be different, perhaps varying races may exist on the neighbouring bodies equipped to meet the different conditions. This he thought possible, but that none of them are at present in the "human stage" of development. Of planets outside our own solar system, of course, we could know nothing.

We rested after a while from our work on the sketch and the conversation continued over the teacups. Sir Oliver expressed the conviction that America must lead in science in the future, as, among other reasons, unlimited money is provided there for the furtherance of scientific experimentation along all lines. He expressed an envy, with which I had the greatest sympathy, of American scientists of his acquaintance who have at their command money in any quantity necessary for the pursual of their investigations. I did not know that great scientists were ever treated, like artists, as luxuries.

I asked him, too, about his investigation years ago of the famous medium, Eusapia Paladino. This brought a reminiscent smile to his face. He said that she was for the most part a precious old fraud, willing to do anything to deceive, but possessed, nevertheless, of remarkable powers. Several mediums to-day have similar ability, notably an Austrian boy who can cause levitation of heavy objects, and exert a mysterious force in other surprising ways. He asked if I was interested in spiritualism. I said that I was, decidedly, but knew practically nothing about it. In response to my question whether any progress at all had been made towards the explanation of spiritualistic phenomena, he replied that some slight progress had been made, but that most of the *genuine* manifestations of this kind still remain mysteries. It is his hope, and that of some other scientists, to clear away as much of the uncertainty as possible, and toward this end he is conducting experiments at his laboratories. He invited me to his home in the country, and promised me a view of his workshops.

Fortunately, the following Sunday found me in Salisbury, so I rang him up from my hotel. Sir Oliver's fine, hearty voice, with its rich Staffordshire "burr," was most pleasant to hear again. He had previously drawn a diagram to direct me in finding Normanton House, regretting that his motor car was not available for use at the present time. I replied that it would be a simple matter to get one in the town. "No, no," he said; "get a bicycle. You'll enjoy the exercise, and it is cheaper."

Sir Oliver's house is a large rectangular edifice of alternating blocks of grey stone and chalk that is studded with flints. The checker-board alternation is relieved above a certain height by a variation of design of the chalk against a background of the stone. A splendid avenue of huge trees leads to the dwelling, around which are other buildings, roofed with thatch, and gardens of brilliant flowers. On entering, the first object that attracted my eyes was a photographic portrait of Raymond Lodge, with a wreath of immortelles festooned across it. My host appeared promptly, and, after

calling my attention to this picture, showed me, among other things, an excellent likeness of himself in oils, and a number of Lady Lodge's paintings. He carried me off then to his psychical laboratory, where he had an apparatus designed for taking photographs of spirits. The cameras were arranged before a cabinet, and there was a considerable amount of electrical appliance connected with it. I asked if he had as yet produced any successful photographs. He replied that he had not, and appeared quite sceptical of the possibility of its achievement. One plate, he said, showed an almost formless fog that his assistant thought to be a spirit photograph, but he is convinced that it is not. He does not think that the thing can be done, and smiled at the credulity of certain spiritualists who champion so enthusiastically photographs that they themselves did not produce. "Photography is very easily manipulated, you know. If I produce some successful pictures myself, I will believe it, but not before."

Sir Oliver Lodge is, first of all, a great scientist, and in trying to explain psychical phenomena he remains the scientist, absolutely. Thousands of people of the highest intelligence have observed the exercise by mediums of a mysterious physical force that causes heavy objects to rise in the air, that can make deep indentations in stiff clay at a considerable distance, and perform many other equally surprising things. Some of the mediums, too, achieve remarkable feats in the psychic field, with the published accounts of which most of us are familiar. These are not superstitions, but

SIR OLIVER LODGE.

actual realities, unless we are to believe that a multitude of the greatest scientists of the world, as well as many famous men of various professions, have been successfully and repeatedly hoaxed over a long period of years, and in spite of the most exacting precautions that they could devise. The list of the names of eminent men who have observed these things and have been forced to believe in them as actual scientific realities is enough to give pause to the most sceptical. In whose province, then, lies the investigation of these physical forces if not in that of the physicist? And who is to sift the evidence having to do with the psychological phenomena that have been authoritatively observed and recorded if not the psychologist? If, after all, they are false, these are the people to prove it, and the finger of scorn should not be directed at their endeavours. True, Sir Oliver believes that he has been in communication with the spirit of his son, a thing that, as yet, he cannot prove to the satisfaction of many of us. But if he did not believe he would hardly have the same incentive to investigate the many phenomena that are as yet unexplained. And does it not seem reasonable that a subject able to impress the mind of a man whose record in science has few parallels must have a great deal in it? He is one of the pioneers, willing to dare, and to seek the truth even in this almost forbidden field. Columbus was ridiculed because he believed the world was round, and had the courage to brave uncharted seas to try to prove it. The sincere scientist seeks after the truth even though his efforts bring derision upon him, and welcomes the truth whether it elevates his theory to the dignity of a law or dashes it into oblivion.

SIR OLIVER spoke with a smile and a shrug, and Lady Lodge a bit more feelingly, of the uplifting of eyebrows in some quarters because of their championing of spiritualism. A great many self-constituted critics think that they must be a bit "touched," she said, or they would not have espoused such a belief. But they are not in the slightest degree shaken in their determination to pursue their investigations with all possible thoroughness. They regret that so much of their work must be done through mediums, as some of these people are willing at times to resort to pretence to bolster up any sagging of their powers. But it seems to me that the world is fortunate in having so great a scientist as Sir Oliver Lodge battling with a subject that has baffled and given concern to so many people over a great span of years. I do not speak as a partisan of spiritualism. As I have said before, I am without knowledge of the subject, and quite sceptical myself. But I am in the fullest sympathy with the sincere inquiry into a subject that is involved with such a variety of untabulated forces.

Adjoining the psychical laboratory was one devoted to physical research. I was greatly interested in various devices, among them an amplifier of sounds that Sir Oliver is perfecting that makes audible the ticking of a watch at a distance of thirty or forty yards. One of these was attached to his radio outfit. He tried to pick up messages for me, but none were being broadcasted at the moment. There was a top that did astonishing things, apparently making a jest of the law of gravity, and a model of the moon that aped all the phases of the real one and treated me to the spectacle of an eclipse into the bargain.

When we had finished in the laboratories I was shown the study, a huge vaulted apartment covering nearly the entire top of the house, with a wealth of books in cases arranged around the room and away from the wall, like the book-stacks of a public library in miniature. On the ends of these and on the wall were small framed portraits of eminent scientists. "This is Lister," said Sir Oliver, "this is Ampère, this Pasteur, and Helmholtz. Do you know about Helmholtz?"

"I remember a bit about him," I replied. "I had a year or two of physics in school."

"Oh, did you?" Then, with a mirthful twinkle, "I didn't, I studied the classics!"

Lady Lodge is possessed of an extremely attractive personality. Her hair is white, her features strong and cleanly cut. She bears somewhat of a resemblance to Lady Gregory. She is an efficient co-worker with her husband in the psychic field. During luncheon she talked at some length of their endeavours. It was most interesting to hear her speak with simple and absolute faith of the spirit world, and of their communication with those who had passed beyond. She said her belief was a source of great comfort, as it settles so satisfactorily all doubt as to the fate awaiting us in the future existence.

We visited her studio later and saw many skilful sketches that she has produced from time to time since her student days under Alphonse Legros in London. Two recent ones in oils were of sunlight effects, and revealed most excellent observation. She said she found it most refreshing to indulge in a bit of "shop" talk about the work, a thing usually denied her in the country. A sincere love of art was evident in her enthusiastic discussion of it.

After a stroll through the flower gardens and meadows to the near-by Avon the time for my departure arrived if I was to see Stonehenge, some three miles distant across the rolling Salisbury Plain. Sir Oliver accompanied me most of the way, a striking figure striding briskly in the high wind, telling me of the Druids and their temple as we walked. And when the ancient ruin stood silhouetted on the horizon he bade me adieu with a kindly heartiness that left a pleasant glow.

MAURICE HEWLETT.

IT seems most fitting that I happen to be in Italy as I write these paragraphs about one who has loved it so well, and who has shared its beauty through his writings with multitudes, most of whom have not been privileged to enjoy this

MAURICE HEWLETT.

lovely country at first hand. Readers of the novels and poems of Mr. Maurice Hewlett will find their minds turning hitherward at the mention of his name. His present abode is far away, but his choice of it indicates a consistent taste. Though Salisbury and its vicinity are typically English, there is much that is similar to Italy in the loveliness of the locality. Five beautiful streams flow tortuously through the town, their dark transparent waters enriched in colour by the long, abundant moss that is combed by the lively current, and the darting trout tempt those with whom angling is a passion to make light of the law. A multitude of quaint bridges cross these streams, and from them the winding waterways between the ancient houses of this Venice of England, as it is so fittingly called, are worthy prototypes of the canals of its Italian namesake.

From this enchanting spot I was driven some seven or eight miles to the tiny village of Broadchalke. My conveyance was a hybrid affair, consisting of a chassis of America's best-known and most-widely distributed car, upon which, like the flag of Britain, the sun never sets, but in this case utterly extinguished by a huge English body that was almost too great a burden to be borne, especially in the ascent of the large hills that we encountered on our journey. The law of compensation made full amends, however, for in the descent of the hills the car's performance was excellent.

Asking our way at Broadchalke we proceeded a short distance through narrow, winding lanes and found our destination in a charming stone cottage nestling in a valley between two high hills. I am sure that every worker in the arts yearns often for just such a retreat as this, where concentration and recreation are possible without the wearing toll of energy that the cities take.

The sound of the labouring of our brave little motor brought Mr. Hewlett to greet me. His physical appearance was quite as his photographs had led me to expect, except that his hair is white. His face is sensitive and somewhat eagle-like, and his unusually large dark blue eyes proclaim the poet. The upper part of his head is broad, with the keen eyes wide apart, and below the prominent cheek-bones the jaws are narrow. His mouth turns downward at the corners under his crisp rising moustaches; the complete impression is of a man who is nervous and highly organized.

After a look at the flower garden, with its thatched walls of chalk sloping downward to a crystal brook at its foot, we entered the living room of the house, with almost its entire length thrown open to the out-of-doors.

The producing of my lithographic crayons for the sketch brought forth some amusing reminiscences of the American, Joseph Pennell, of a time when Mr. Hewlett and he were doing some work together in Italy, which was followed by a good story about the perennially entertaining Mr. Shaw. Also a clever utterance of W. S. Gilbert which I must repeat: "I am sure no one could possibly think more highly of X—— than I do—and I think he's a nasty little beast!"

My distinguished host was most beguiling. He told me many interesting things about the neighbouring country; of Salisbury, with its beautiful Cathedral and Close, and its near-by ancient ancestor, Old Sarum. The fact that Constable produced some of his finest canvases in the Salisbury meadows brought forth an interesting discussion of his influence, and that of Turner, on modern landscape painting. We inspected his household gods, which include some excellent examples of old furniture and china, as well as some interesting prints, and, his family being absent, I was afforded an alluring glimpse of them through their photographs.

At luncheon I was regaled with the most excellent roast duck I have ever eaten, and the "wine of the country," apple cider, provided a delightful complement. My host consented to talk a bit about his own work, and showed me some illustrated editions of his novels. He is not writing novels at the present time, but is occupied mostly with several series of articles that appear at intervals in British publications; and it afforded me much pleasure to be the bearer to him of a most enthusiastic message from Mr. Joseph Conrad, to the effect that Mr. Hewlett's articles are for him a constant source of delight.

Thus the interesting hours sped, and the diligence of my pencil sagged considerably over a discussion of the relations among the different forms of creative expression. The sound of the motor that came to take me back to Salisbury found the drawing not quite finished, and, its completion achieved, I was not allowed to depart without tea. Then the absolute refusal to function of the engine of my aged conveyance, a different one, also of American make, but one step higher in the mechanical and social scale than its predecessor, afforded us a splendid opportunity for profound mechanical theorizing and a display of our familiarity with the names of certain parts, most of

which seemed to be entirely lacking in this remarkable ancestor of the up-to-date motor-car. Just as Mr. Hewlett was dispatching a messenger for assistance, with no apparent reason the motor started at a great rate, so with hurried adieux lest delay might prove fatal I was spinning over the hills towards Salisbury.

JOHN DRINKWATER.

IN an attractive room in Ashburn Gardens I found the author of that excellent play, "Abraham Lincoln." When I saw it produced in New York some two years ago, my heart warmed to the man, not an American, who could portray this great figure so fully and understandingly within the limited compass of a play. Economy and elimination were necessary, the cutting away of all but the great essentials, and this the author achieved.

I was surprised to find Mr. John Drinkwater so young a man. He has much to show for his forty years. And twelve of them were spent with assurance companies. Few men who are successful in writing, it seems, start life in this vocation. Most of them drift into it from other activities more or less remotely removed, of which the law apparently is the most prolific.

Mr. Drinkwater is fortunate in that his

JOHN DRINKWATER.

head is handsome without regularity of features. He has abundance of black hair that grows low on his broad forehead. There is a considerable sprinkling of grey that is quite marked at the temples. His eyes are black and far apart, with strongly-marked slanting eyebrows. His nose is low in the bridge and retroussé. His mouth is of generous size, curving and interestingly irregular. The chin, though strong, is short and recedes somewhat. All of which gives a portraitist so many interesting surprises to seize upon that the pleasure of recording such a face is vastly greater than if it were handsome through regularity. Mr. Drinkwater has the sort of head that Holbein delighted in, dwelling with loving care on each irregularity.

On the walls of the room in which we sat were a number of beautiful drawings, including examples of Cotman and Augustus John. The collecting of them has long been one of Mr. Drinkwater's pleasures, and his conversation on the subject of art showed thorough understanding. He told me, too, about his latest work—a book of poems and a play.

Later, we met again by chance at a week-end house-party in Kent. Here I saw him enjoying the out-of-doors, a most attractive figure in his flannels, with an authority over the tennis racket that I envied. In the conversational intercourse that came between the more active amusements, he was more frequently the interested listener than the contributor, and sat sometimes with a look of dreaming introspection upon his face that suggested the creative mood of this able visualizer of great figures of the past.

W. W. JACOBS.

ANOTHER most interesting recent contact, and one from which I had much pleasure, was with Mr. W. W. Jacobs. As his home is at some distance from London, he obliged me by coming to my hotel when he happened to be in town. Our visit began at luncheon and ended after a most delightful dinner at a restaurant in Regent Street. Like many writers who have rare humour at their command, Mr. Jacobs' habitual expression of face is rather wistful, almost sad. His hair is nearly white, and in artificial light looks blond, giving a most youthful effect to his appearance. As in the case of Lord Balfour, it is easy to imagine, as you look into Mr. Jacobs' serious, wide eyes, what he was like as a small boy. His voice is low and his manner quiet and gentle. Of his work he speaks in the most modest terms. His casual valuation of it reminded me of Mr. Hutchinson's similar attitude toward his own products. When I assured him that I could not accept his splendid performance at his own modest estimate, and that in America he has a large and enthusiastic audience among people whose opinions are most to be valued, he seemed surprised and pleased. But in looking back upon the writers of the past it is easy to recall many, and of the greatest, whose humility was equally marked.

As I worked upon my sketch Mr. Jacobs' conversation was most delightful. He is possessed of an interesting philosophy of life that is quite his own, with many whimsical and humorous aspects. It was a pleasure to see his face light up with his rare sunny smile as he brought forth some very fresh and original observation from a quaint and unexpected view-point. His humour is rendered precious by the priceless quality of restraint.

Mr. Jacobs started life in the Civil Service, but soon found his proper field, and his excellent sea stories began to appear. At the present time he is engaged for the most part with the writing of short stories of a humorous nature. He is the father of five children, two sons and three daughters, and it is quite apparent that they are even more important to him than literature. He says that in our children we continue to live, and for his own part hopes that this is the only immortality. The struggle here is enough, he thinks, without a future repetition. I pointed out that a successful writer had little to complain of, particularly in the struggle for the necessary material things, in view of the many channels for the sale and re-sale of his works. The various rights afforded in the several fields of book and serial publication, followed by the stage and the cinema, to be repeated in different countries, make of them absolute plutocrats compared to the average successful painter. The writer's work, like that of the musician, is sold to vast audiences, each consumer contributing a small sum that they can easily afford toward their total incomes. The artist paints many pictures, as a rule that he never sells, and when he finds a client he must receive a considerable sum for a picture. But then it is finished. There

W. W. JACOBS.

are no more " rights " to sell. He must go on painting until another affluent purchaser appears, with the result of a much lower average of earning capacity. Mr. Jacobs smiled and admitted the writer's financial advantage over the artist. " But," he said, " there is a considerable comfort for you that you must not overlook. When you sell a portrait the sum you receive for it is good assurance that it will be cared for indefinitely, and it will be treasured too for its personal associations, while our stories are read, perhaps, and tossed into the waste-paper basket."

He gave me a delightfully humorous word-picture of life in a small English town, with its social activities carefully confined in distinct strata, the salient characters of each easily recognizable in hundreds of similar communities, and when it became necessary for him to rush away in a cab to the railway station to catch the train that was to take him home, I wished that our visit had just begun.

WHAT CURED HIM

by

W. B. MAXWELL

ILLUSTRATED BY E. F. SHERIE

MR. LESLIE and his wife came up from their suburb quite early in the morning; and he was to see her off from the big London terminus before going to his business.

He had wanted to do this; and she said she would allow him only on one condition—that he left her at once instead of waiting there till the train started. He jovially agreed to her considerate proviso, saying, "Yes, rather meaningless, that pause, during which you have to pump up fresh conversation or keep on saying good-bye." And he added that it was especially irksome nowadays, when you have to go to the station so early in order to secure a seat. "That is, unless you can book it in advance—and you can't on this line."

He secured her a seat all right, going boldly forward along the endless platform until he found a ladies' compartment in the coach next to the engine.

"I hope this won't be too jolty-joggified," he said, after installing her and tipping the porter. "You know, they go a devil of a pace. Perhaps you'd be more comfortable in the middle of the train. Rachel, I think I'll go back and see if——"

"No, no," she said. "This will do excellently."

She had closed the door of the compartment and was leaning through the window,

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while he stood close to the door, looking up at her face; so that they formed the group which popular artists of a more sentimental age used to paint so often, in all its typical varieties—the husband and the wife at the moment of separation.

Of these two types, Jack Leslie was a tall, good-looking, genial man of forty; and Rachel, his wife, was perhaps thirty-six, a thin, elegant sort of woman who once must have been pretty, but who had now become a little faded. They seemed to be very fond of each other—he showing affection exuberantly, and she with a fine reticence. But the few slight indications that she betrayed, such as a just perceptible quiver of the lip, a quickly checked tremulousness of the voice, and the almost yearning look in her eyes, were more eloquent than mere words or hand pressures.

"Go now," she said, quietly.

"Not yet"; and he looked at his watch. "Why, you have nearly half an hour. We *were* early. Let me stay a few more minutes. Remember, I'm losing you for the better part of a week."

It had been a sudden desire of hers to go away for two or three days, to stay with an old school-friend who now lived in the North.

"Then you'll be back," he said, looking at his watch again—"you'll be back as arranged? I shall see you on Friday?"

"Yes," she said, "unless you see me before."

"Oh, you mustn't hurry!"

"Because you won't be in any real hurry to have me back?"

"Rachel, how can you speak like that—even in joke?"

"But suppose I'm not joking?" As she said this her pale face seemed to become a little paler, and its expression was very intent, very eager. "You have been so ready to let me go."

"Because I thought the change would do you good. I only wish I was going with you."

"Then come with me," she said, impulsively, taking his hand through the window and gazing at him earnestly. "Come with me. It would make me so happy. I want to hear you say you'll come."

But that, as he explained, was quite out of the question.

"I could not possibly get away to-day."

"To-day especially?" she asked. "Do you mean you have things to do to-day that can't be put off?"

He said yes.

"What sort of things? Is there nobody at the office to take your place in an emergency?"

He laughed. "This isn't an emergency." And he spoke of the hundreds of things that keep a man rigorously in his office.

"If I waited till the afternoon, could you get away then?"

But he said no. The afternoon was often his busiest time.

Then he consented to leave the platform. There were still fifteen minutes before the train started; but she said she was quite all right, and, thanking him for the time he had wasted already, forbade him to waste any more.

"Good-bye, my dear."

"*Au revoir*, Jack."

On the way to the barrier he paused twice to look back and wave his hand to her, still standing at the carriage window; then he went briskly through the crowded station and out into the bright sunshine of the crowded streets.

AT about half-past three on the afternoon of that same brilliant July day he was assisting a young lady to get out of a boat in front of Hampton Court Palace. They had had luncheon in London and then come down here, where she was at once seized by the fancy that she would like an hour on the water before going into the gardens of that adorable old palace. Whatever she fancied Mr. Leslie seemed to fancy too. It was a prearranged idyllic little episode—they were to have a long afternoon and evening all to themselves.

"You clever Jacko! You row quite *beautifully*."

"Do I, Doro, dear? A bit out of practice, what?"

Doro was short for Dorothy. She having turned his name of Jack into Jacko, it had occurred to him in an inspired moment to make Doro out of Dorothy. She was Dorothy Lane in full; the twenty-three-year-old wife of rather elderly Mr. Lane, a neighbour of the Leslies.

Standing against a stone balustrade in the sunlit garden, a background of dark yew trees behind her, she made a pretty if conventional figure with her muslin frock and broad-brimmed hat, her looped curls and naturally vivid complexion. One might have known instinctively that when she glanced downward she was aware, without vanity, of the charming effect of her long eyelashes, and that she had often been told that the dreamy expression of the eyes themselves was very attractive. She was the sort of person who takes pride in her vaguely poetic thoughts, subtle imaginings, and intense longings after the very highest of high things. For the rest, she had a more than slightly artificial manner; and Jack Leslie, very noticeably, reflected her little artificialnesses in his

own manner. He was different from what he had been earlier in the day.

As they stood there talking about the most modern art, the latest music, or the newest poetry—matters so familiar to her and so unintelligible to him—he was trying hard to lift himself to that realm of cultured lore in which she moved with such ease and grace. He succeeded in this "highbrow chat" better than one might have expected; but he had bad lapses, falling as it were with a crash into the commonplace.

She liked the garden, and hesitated as to entering the palace and seeing the pictures.

"The only objection," he said, "is that they won't allow you to smoke inside."

"You mean that they won't allow *you* to smoke inside," said Doro. "*I* don't want to."

Jacko laughed, admiring the quickness and the wit of her reply.

She let him off the pictures, and soon tiring of the gardens had a fancy for a long walk in Bushey Park, indicating minor fancies to be gratified *en route*, such as examining the baby fronds of the bracken, hearing a woodpecker, endeavouring to tame one of the tame deer; in a word, getting closer to Nature. He knew that after all this her next fancy would be for afternoon tea; and in very prosaic fashion he spoke of the light but cheering meal.

"We'll go right through to that hotel at Teddington. They do one very decently there." Then he went on in better style. "Doro, do you remember that very first time—when the hawthorn was like snow—and you said the laburnums were dropping gold rain?"

This, stirring channels of thought just as they passed through the park gates, caused her to allude to the impropriety of their conduct and to quote two lines from the new volume of her favourite French poet. And she sighed, and, looking at him almost lackadaisically, said: "Oh, Jacko, Jacko, why do you make me do these things?"

AH! Why did he do them himself? What satisfaction could be derived from making a fool of himself with this young woman and leading her to make a fool of herself with him? Fatuous conceit, imbecility, what was it? He knew that these flirtations with the Mrs. Lanes of life were wrong, he knew that they were silly; he was in truth quite a good sort, altogether devoid of wickedness. But perhaps merely because he was forty and going to be fifty ten years hence, he snatched wildly at the sports of heedless youth—just as you may see large, round, middle-aged men dancing at night clubs, or playing polo, or attempting to ride point-to-point races, when they ought to be content to remain dignified lookers-on.

Perhaps, too, like all essentially commonplace people, he had yearnings for the romantic, felt lured by the spirit of adventure. For it should be remembered that these infinitely trite conversations about verses and books, this Cockney outing, this almost bank-holiday excursion, to him *were* romance. Over it all there was glamour—if no more than the glamour of the forbidden; as in salmon-poaching, brandy-smuggling, gun-running, or any other illicit and slightly dangerous traffic of mankind.

And he adored his wife. Except for this nonsense she was all the world to him. That added to the strangeness of it.

Sometimes, when his conscience pricked him after a new escapade, he tried to persuade himself that his vagaries were altogether innocent because none of them had developed into substantial infidelity; moreover, there was comfort in the thought that if he had not been childless they would not have occurred at all. With children to watch, his eyes would never have roamed outside the four walls of home. Well, it was not too late to hope for offspring who might survive infancy; those two great disappointments of theirs were not irremediable—the doctors said so. Then, and in that case, he would turn over a new leaf. There should be no more Doros.

From the still recent beginning of things with Dorothy Lane he had made no secret of the very high opinion that he entertained in regard to his wife. Dorothy always applauded him for these eulogistic references to Rachel, saying she loved him for his loyalty and thought it entirely sweet; but one may suppose that, human nature being what it is, she was now and then a little weary.

He continued the practice this afternoon—but not until they had indulged in the kind of talk that had now become almost a routine.

"Doro, I think you are the loveliest thing in the universe."

They were sitting on the ground in a secluded part of the park, thus getting really close to Nature, and he lolled comfortably and supported his back with the trunk of a tree; while she, at a little distance, picked blades of grass and studied them admiringly. She had taken off her hat, so that he could see the whole of her curly hair.

"Oh, no, Jacko, I'm not lovely, though I'm glad if I seem to be in your eyes. My upper lip is far too short—and there are

"Doro, I think you are the loveliest thing in the universe."

faults in my profile." She turned her head to let him have the side view.

"Perfect. I wish you could be painted by the greatest artist—and carved by the greatest sculptor——"

"Oh, yes, and put upon the films by the greatest producer," and she laughed. "Silly Jacko." Then in a moment she became serious, and there followed some absolutely routine work. "Tell me again what

you saw in me first of all. Not just only—prettiness ? "

It was truly cut-and-dried now for a little while—they had gone through it so often during these last few weeks. In reply to his explanation she said he had marvellously divined all of her that lay beneath the surface. It was his rapid intuition that had drawn her to him and made the bond between them. She was, in fact, and had always been, misunderstood—or rather not understood at all; and she touched on the maze of life, the inscrutability of fate, the uselessness of vain regrets, concluding with another sigh. " Perhaps I oughtn't to blame people for not understanding me. On my word of honour I sometimes don't understand myself. For instance, can you tell me, Jacko, why I ever married my husband ? "

He could and yet he could not. He could have given her the obvious answer that she had married Mr. Lane for his money, but this would not have satisfied her—even if he added that he thought Mr. Lane dear at the price. In his difficulty he allowed the thing to slide, and began soon to talk about his wife.

And he went on talking about her, saying how devoted he was to her, with praise of her goodness, her kindness, her cleverness; saying also how well he knew that Mrs. Lane thoroughly appreciated her.

DORO, although perhaps wearied by the length of his testimonial, carried herself through it with credit, saying appropriately, " Indeed yes. Dear Rachel. A heart of gold. My friend of friends," and so forth. Then at the end of it she asked, as though the notion had struck her now for the first time, " If dear Rachel found out about us, Jacko, do you think she would mind ? "

" *Mind !* " said Jack, startled from his easy attitude, moving forward as if the tree had pushed him, and sitting up stiffly. " I should jolly well think she *would* mind. What on earth do you mean ? "

Dorothy said she meant nothing; she was only reflecting, wondering.

" Of course," he said, firmly, " Rachel hasn't the ghost of a suspicion—not even that I admire you."

" I wonder," said Dorothy, meditatively.

" But why do you wonder, when I tell you she doesn't ? What the devil makes you wonder ? Has anything happened ? Don't keep anything back from me."

" No, no. I only asked myself."

The whole manner of Mr. Jack Leslie had changed again. He was entirely natural, outspoken and direct too, yet withal a little flustered—very much as he appeared to clerks and typewriting young ladies in the office when some error had been committed or an expected order had gone to another firm. He had risen to his feet and he stood over the still seated Mrs Lane, questioning her in a way that would have been severe if it had not been so agitated.

" Well," she said, " I never thought dear Rachel harboured the very tiniest wee guess till a week ago. But since then I must confess the thought *has* passed through my mind."

" But why ? "

" I'll tell you how it began. About a week ago dear Rachel and that Miss Pennell and one or two others were lunching with me—only ladies, you know. And afterwards—after lunch, I mean—Miss Pennell *talked*. She just talked and talked, in her odious cynical way—trying to be clever and philosophical and all the rest of it. Of course, *I* think she's a hateful woman."

" So do I. I've always avoided the old cat. But get on with it."

And Dorothy, getting on with the tale, related how Miss Pennell, seated there after luncheon, screwing her eyeglass into her eye, sipping her coffee, and puffing at her cigarette, had said that all men are the same; that you cannot trust one of them farther than you can see him; and that why they are not more often bowled out in their iniquity is that people don't set about doing it properly.

" Confound her," said Jack, with an indignant snort. " But go on."

Miss Pennell—as Dorothy, proceeding again, reported—had then said that, as an example, if a wife has reason to think her husband is paying too much attention to another woman, she nearly always begins by accusing him. That is a false move. It puts him on his guard. She should say nothing, but quietly observe him; for men are stupid creatures and will go blundering on and expose themselves if you do not alarm them.

Jack Leslie snorted again.

" Did Rachel say anything to this ? "

" Not a word."

" What did *you* say ? "

" Oh, I turned it off by saying I had blind faith in my husband and knew he would never deceive me."

Then Miss Pennell had given them more. She said the great mistake is in watching the suspected man, when you really ought to watch the suspected woman. She said, suppose Mr. A. is thought to be carrying on with Miss B. or Mrs. C., as the case may be. Don't watch A., but *watch Miss B*. She said the man moves more quickly,

diving into Tube lifts, dashing about in taxis; he covers his tracks when he goes to meet the woman; he has, too, a dozen ways of accounting for his time. Whereas the woman is far easier to follow; she will sacrifice safety to economy, travelling by omnibus when she ought to take a cab; and it is much more difficult for her to explain her absences.

"Upon my word!" Jack was very indignant, wrathfully inveighing against nasty old maids who put horrible ideas into people's heads. "But Rachel gave no sign of being upset by all this stuff?"

"No—no sign at all."

"No; fortunately the old wretch had come to the wrong shop with Rachel. Rachel's too clean-minded for that sort of seed to germinate."

"Yes, but I haven't really finished, Jacko. I'm sure it's a coincidence—that is, I've told myself it's a coincidence—but since then, since that luncheon party, I've seen such a *lot* of Rachel."

"Oh!"

"Yes. She has looked in almost every day—and rung me up, too, asking me to lunch with her—or to spend the afternoon or evening—or all next day with her."

"She has, has she?"

"Yes—and, of course, fond as I am of dear Rachel, enormous friends as we've always been—well, we weren't *quite* on that footing. Not inseparable, don't you know. *That* was what made me ask myself the question—and——"

"Stop. Let me think this out."

He walked to and fro, not offering any assistance to her as she scrambled up from the ground and shook the dust from her pretty muslin frock. He did not even hand her her hat. He was worried, perturbed; rather flushed, and breathing hard.

But after a long silence he turned to her and spoke triumphantly. "I've considered it on all sides and I'm not afraid. No"—and he gave a sigh of relief. "Rachel is always straightforward, always aboveboard. Hers is an expansive temperament—I might almost say an explosive temperament. It isn't *in* her to act deceitfully for any purpose, I don't care what. My dear, you can take it from me, if she suspected you she'd tell you so, bang out. She wouldn't wait—much less pry upon you." And, squaring his shoulders, he spoke with even stronger confidence. "Besides, admitting for a moment that she had twigged anything, then she wouldn't have gone away. That settles it. But, you naughty Doro," and he laughed, "you gave me a scare, and I don't like scares. Come on. Let's go and have tea."

THEY made their way back towards the chestnut avenues, walking side by side but not hand in hand—as they might have done, since there were very few people about. Somehow the idyllic character of their little treat had been damaged if not destroyed. He was still thoughtful, still turning things over mentally, and his outward manner retained the abruptness of business hours; while she seemed tired or languid, and drifting towards fretfulness. Thus they went, with meagre conversation, round the road that led in the direction of the hotel and the railway station.

Then half-way between the park and the hotel, just when she was beginning to talk more freely, he stopped short and told her to listen.

"Listen. What's that fellow shouting?"

It was a newspaper man coming down a quiet side road, selling a paper here and there to maidservants at garden gates and then hurrying on with renewed shouts. As Mrs. Lane stood listening, she saw an extraordinary expression in her companion's face. Then they both heard what the man was crying.

"Terrible railway accident. Terrible loss of life. Railway disaster."

Jack Leslie bought a paper and stood by a garden gate, eagerly turning the pages. There seemed to be nothing—and he said this to the man, who was hurrying on.

"Stop Press," the man called to him, and then shouted again: "Railway disaster. Appalling accident—'palling accident."

The blood had rushed to Jack's head and then rushed away, leaving him with a transient sensation of faintness; he had what the French call an *éblouissement*, and for a few moments he could not see properly. Of course, those two words, "railway accident," always must shock the ear and arouse anxiety in the heart of anybody who knows that somebody else whom he loves is at the time travelling on a railway. But with Jack it was more than this fluttering anxiousness, this desire for prompt reassurance; it was like a premonition, a superstitious dread, the first iron clutch of an abominable terror.

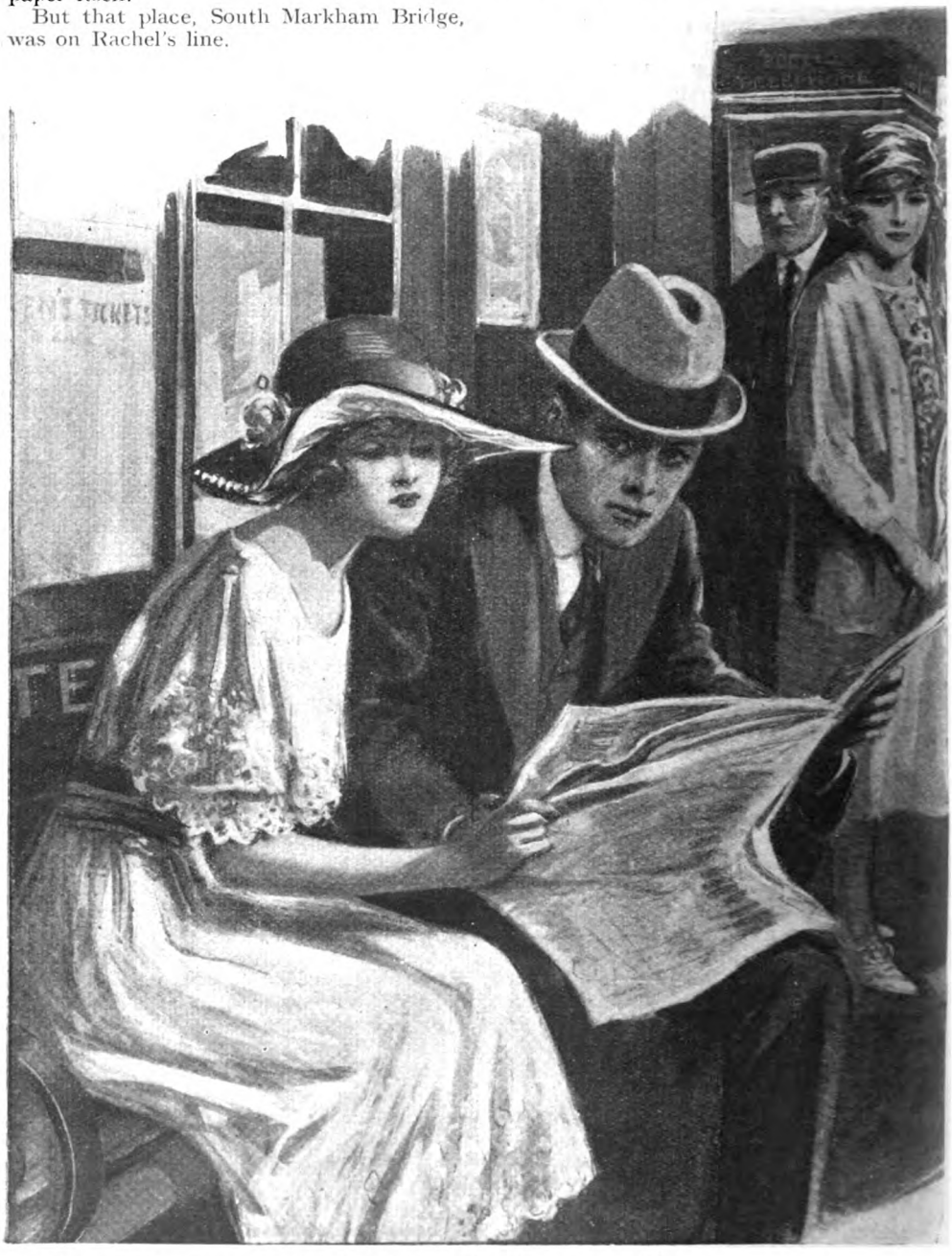
Dorothy, who had taken the paper from him and was hunting through it again, kept murmuring sympathetic words. "Naturally, you're thinking of Rachel. But of course not—— Don't be frightened—— Absurd to suppose—— Certain not even to be the line she went by—— They always exaggerate—— Here we are"; and she read the brief message under the head of Stop Press.

The message only said that an express train had been wrecked at a place called

South Markham Bridge, and it was feared there might be great loss of life; those adjectives "terrible" and "appalling" had been provided by the newspaper-seller and did not appear in the newspaper itself.

But that place, South Markham Bridge, was on Rachel's line.

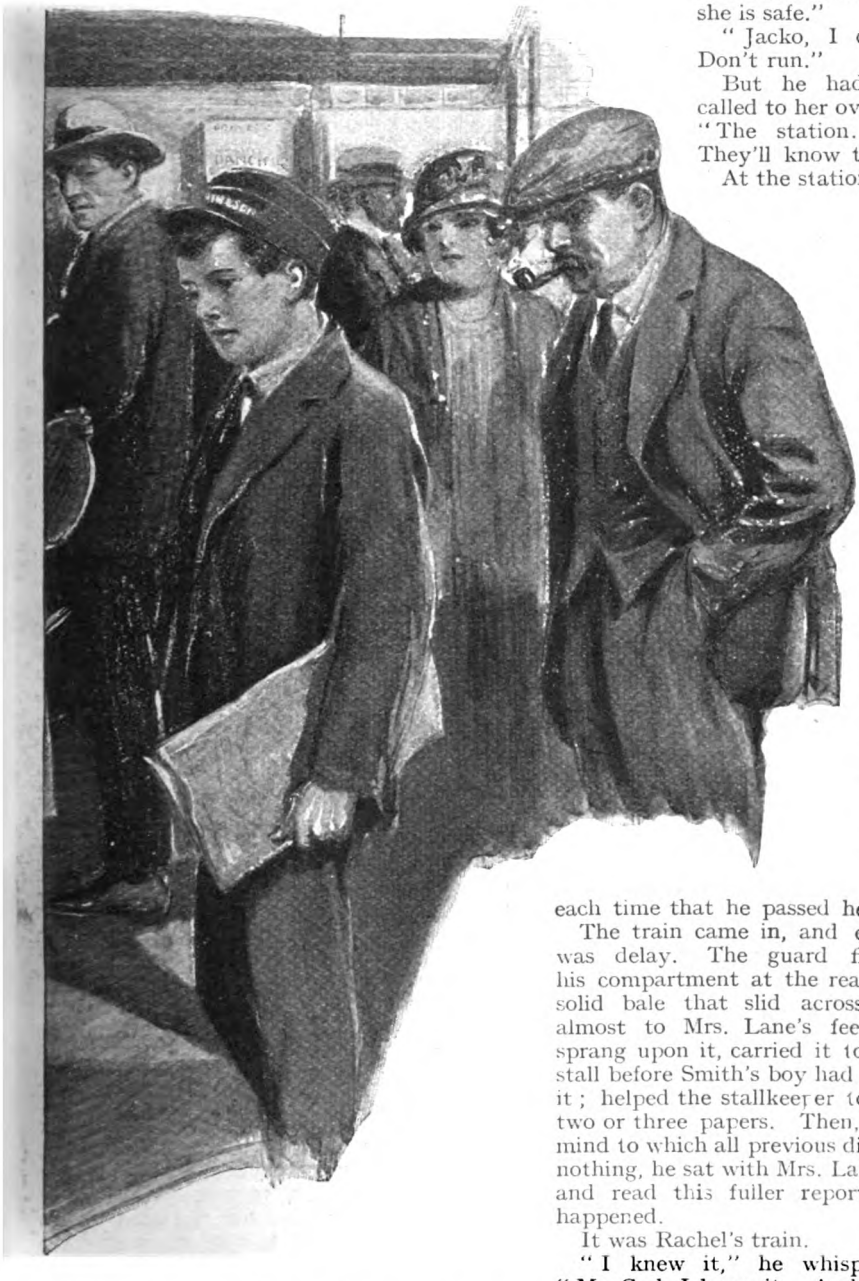
Doro uttered a little cry; for Jack, stepping out into the roadway and dashing across it, was nearly knocked down by a motor-car. It was as though he had been deafened as well as blinded, and neither



He read the report of what had happened It was Rachel's train. "I knew it," he whispered, hoarsely. "And I put her right in the front—the first coach of all."

heard anything nor saw anything. Instead of going to tea at the hotel he was hurrying to the station.

Doro, overtaking him and trotting beside him, talked to him breathlessly.



" Jack, dear, I understand your feelings—only I'm sure you needn't be afraid. Why, of course not. Think how many trains——"

In truth, he was saying these very things to himself. " Why am I panic-stricken ? There are hundreds of trains. They don't even say it is a train from London. Soon that torment of hot thought and cold fear will cease. I shall be told that she is safe."

" Jacko, I can't keep up. Don't run."

But he had to run. He called to her over his shoulder. " The station. The station. They'll know there."

At the station he clamoured for further news, for more newspapers; but they could tell him nothing. They said that a train would arrive in seven minutes, bringing with it copies of later editions of the evening papers; and in frenzied anxiety he walked up and down the platform, looking at his watch, staring at the signals. Mrs. Lane sat upon a bench fanning herself with her handkerchief, and implored him to be calm each time that he passed her.

The train came in, and even then there was delay. The guard flung out from his compartment at the rear of the train a solid bale that slid across the platform almost to Mrs. Lane's feet; Jack Leslie sprang upon it, carried it to Smith's bookstall before Smith's boy had strolled to meet it; helped the stallkeeper to open it, seized two or three papers. Then, in an agony of mind to which all previous discomfort was as nothing, he sat with Mrs. Lane on the bench and read this fuller report of what had happened.

It was Rachel's train.

" I knew it," he whispered, hoarsely. " My God, I knew it. And I put her right in the front—close to the engine—the first coach of all."

That bright and natural colour had gone

from the plump cheeks of Mrs. Lane; she leaned against him, shivering as they read the words again, a few words here and there, and repeated them in whispers to each other. "The nine-ten express—travelling at high speed—— It is thought some obstruction—or fault—— On a straight stretch of line, with the viaduct in the middle—— The railway officials are reticent—— As yet no list of the killed and injured." After repeating these last words she hid her face in her hands and burst into a fit of hysterical sobbing.

A small group of people had gathered, regarding them with sympathy and curiosity. "What's the trouble? What is it, miss?" Smith's boy stood there waiting to be paid for the newspapers that had been snatched so unceremoniously; the stallkeeper motioned him away, and explained matters to bystanders. "It's the railway accident—Yes, up North. And the gentleman had a friend or relative in the train."—"Oh, poor gentleman!"—"Yes, indeed that's bad."

"It was my wife," said Jack Leslie, looking round at them, and speaking as if they had a right to know.

"It was his wife!" They told one another what he had said, although all had heard it. "And the young lady's his daughter, I suppose? Well, now, miss, don't take on so. Your poor ma mayn't be hurt—she may have escaped. There, there."

Jack had sprung up. "I must go to London. I must go to her. Help me."

An up train was coming in as he spoke. Somebody shouted that it must not start without the gentleman. He and Mrs. Lane were taken charge of, hurried across the footbridge, and helped into an empty compartment.

They were alone together in the moving train, in the poor little electric suburban train that moved so slowly and so safely when compared with the vast steam-driven mass of iron, steel, woodwork, and plate-glass that had gone crashing to its doom a hundred and fifty miles away on South Markham Bridge. They were alone—as they had schemed to be, for the long afternoon and the long evening—and she clung to him, pallid and shaking, herself terrified yet trying to comfort him in his terror. "Jack, I can't believe it—I won't believe it. You must be brave. Don't abandon hope. You may get good news in London. I'll come with you—I'll stay with you."

Mechanically, not aware of what words he used, he told her not to trouble, to leave him alone, to go home and take care of herself. And after that he never spoke to her again. He stared at her as if he did not know her. She was there, white and chattering; and then she was there no more, and he did not even know where or how she had gone. It was as if she had ceased to exist.

THE train crept slowly onward, stopping at every station, seeming to take hours between the stations. Nobody got into the carriage; he was by himself—no, not quite by himself. That other woman had gone; and Rachel, or the something inestimable and overwhelmingly dear that had been Rachel until a few hours ago, was with him now. He could see her face, he could hear her voice. Every moment of their parting scene acted itself again, and the mingled anguish and horror of it almost drove him mad. The pain seemed like fire, burning his brain as he thought of the things she had said to him and the things he had said in reply; and yet in the sharpest pangs of this he clung to it, tried to keep himself to the torment of memory, rather than turn to that worse torture of imagination when he thought of the things unseen, unheard, that had happened since he pressed her hand and lied to her.

"I would like to go with you, Rachel."

"Then come with me—I want you to come with me."

And he had lied and refused. But why had she said that? It was as if, mysteriously, she felt the danger, as if some inner voice had told her that she was going towards a terrible risk, and instinctively she had craved for companionship; as if, at a supreme moment, she claimed what was her right, the supporting strength of the man who had sworn to cherish her and guard her. And he had failed her. In response to that strange yearning look in her eyes, to that strange note of appeal in her loved voice, he had sent her lonely, unsuccoured, to her death. He who would have died a dozen times to save her had left her and betrayed her.

And thoughts of the past rushed upon him, obliterating the fierceness of the pain, drowning him in sorrow and remorse. All their loves came back to him. He saw her as she used to be, young, glowing, beautiful—at least, to him most beautiful; and always so good and true; refining him, lifting him upward. The little that was good in him had come from her. With bitter shame he saw himself too, as an abject, contemptible wretch, never ceasing to love her and be grateful to her, yet allowing himself to notice that her outward charm had faded, allowing himself to notice the still vivid glow of other women's faces. That alone was a betrayal.

And he thought with miserable self-contempt of the meanness and vulgarity of ideas that he had sheltered till now. In the

accomplished disloyalty and treachery, it was nothing that he and his Mrs. Lane were not guilty from the technical point of view, that they had not passed certain limits, that they had not qualified themselves for an appearance in the Divorce Court. That material side of it seemed of less than no account in the monstrous wickedness of the betrayal itself.

He had no hope really, and at the London terminus they gave him no hope. Here, at the terminus, there were other distracted people, all of them put together in a large room on the first floor above the booking-office, from the windows of which he looked down upon the platforms, the crowds of passengers, the roofs of the trains, the life and movement of the vast place, that seemed to grow dim and vague as if the sun had gone down and it was night already.

Soon it was really night, and in the room and down below the lamps were burning. In this room time did not count, minutes and hours were as one. The room belonged to pain and dread. He wanted to go at once to the scene of the disaster, but the railway officials could not let him do that. They said he must wait in the room among the others; they said they were now in telephonic communication with the actual place—a wire had been laid—and they were talking at this minute to the break-down gangs who were hard at work. Soon some more names of the dead might be coming through. The name of Mrs. Leslie was not among the names of the rescued. These railway officials were kind and sympathetic, but, as the newspaper had said, they were reticent. It was admitted, however, that several coaches of the wrecked train had fallen over the bridge into a river or canal.

In the room people talked to themselves aloud; a tall, grey-haired man kept walking up and down, hour after hour, gesticulating; among small groups of women near the windows there was one who never ceased to rock herself and moan, and another now and then lost consciousness and was laid upon the floor. Each time that the door opened a young girl screamed. One might have believed that these people had all been the survivors of the accident. But gradually, as at intervals of unmeasured time news trickled in, the room emptied itself until only Jack Leslie and a very few more were left.

Then suddenly an official of a higher grade than those he had yet seen was talking to him, advising him to have food and drink and then go home. This man told him definitely that there was not the slightest hope of life for anybody in the first two coaches of the train. The passengers in the other part of the train had nearly all been accounted for. As soon as the bodies had been got out of the sunk coaches a special train would take the relatives down to the spot, but that could not be till to-morrow morning. He and another man strongly urged Leslie to go home and sleep there. They were extremely sympathetic, saying amongst other things that it was now very late and they would send an inspector down to the suburb with him to escort him and take care of him.

This assistance he declined, and then, seated in the suburban train, saw without surprise or wonder that the uniformed man was sitting opposite to him. He thought of him no more until he was outside the door of his own house and the man talked to him.

"You've got your latchkey all right, sir! But I see the windows are dark—no one expecting you, seemingly. Shall I come in and rouse the servants?"

"No, thank you."

"But you'll be sadly in need of supper, sir. Mayn't I come in and give a hand? Very good. Then, if you're all right, I'll say good night. We'll 'phone you early about the special."

"Thank you. Good night."

HE let himself into what had been home—her home and his—turned on the lights, went to the dining-room, and closed the door behind him. He wanted no food, no sleep, nothing. He felt done for, half-dead himself, and miserably regretful that he was not quite dead; since henceforth he could never know the least comfort in life. As he looked round the little room a thousand lacerating memories of her seemed to rush into his mind, and with a groan he sank upon a chair by the table and buried his head in his hands. He remained there for perhaps a minute motionless, and then slowly raised his head and looked towards the open doorway.

The door had been quietly opened, and his wife came into the room.

"Rachel!"

He did not for a moment think that she was a ghost, although in her loose white wrapper and with her pale, sad face she looked ghostlike enough. He was gasping, clutching at his throat as if about to suffocate, while he tried to speak and while she spoke to him.

"Rachel! Saved! You escaped!"

"Did you enjoy yourself at Hampton Court?" she was saying. "It must really be a very attractive place, as you have stayed there such a very long time."

She had not even heard of the railway accident, and when at last she understood what he was struggling to tell her she went on with a courteous inflexible gravity.

"I am sorry you have been anxious about me, Jack. But that was something I couldn't foresee. No, I didn't go by the train. I never meant to go. It had become necessary for me to satisfy myself as to you and that woman—so I felt compelled to take the only means. I make no apologies, Jack, because you gave me no choice."

He was not listening; he was only gasping, making noises in his throat.

"Yes, I have had her watched for the last few days—not you, Jack. And now I have been told all I wish to know. Do you understand? I did not go away to-day. But I shall go to-morrow—and it will be for ever. You and Mr. and Mrs. Lane will no doubt be able to worry out arrangements among you. I agree to them in advance, whatever they may be." And unconsciously she echoed some of his own thoughts in regard to the extent of their culpability. "Don't bother to make excuses—and, above all, spare me the sordid details. Don't, please, tell me that you only go up the river with her for the day and never to the seaside for week-ends."

Although she said this with a fine biting scorn, he was not listening; he was only gurgling and gasping.

"So there we are, Jack. Good night."

But then he broke down. After the long-endured strain he just snapped. It was like the very worst case of shell-shock, dreadful, devastating to see. It seemed not mental at all, purely physical, an abrupt collapse, a break in every nerve control; so that while he wept and howled as a small child does he made a ghastly kind of epileptic grimace and his whole frame twitched and shook as though in St. Vitus's dance. Presently he was beating the table with his hands. Then he was on the floor at her feet, then grasping her legs, crushing his contorted face against her knees. At last words began to sound amid the storm of inarticulate noise, and that was almost more shattering than what had gone before.

"Not dead—not dead! Oh, merciful God, take my life as forfeit for hers—my Rachel—my little Rachel! Let her go on living and let me die. Save her from the wreck of the world—my Rachel, my wife, my angel girl."

Whatever his faults he loved her, and because of the love she forgave him. And because of her forgiveness and the curative effects of the shock, he will never offend again.

ACROSTICS.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 119.

(The Third of the Series.)

DEAR friend of childhood, far from white in hue,
Boy, dame, and master, all should welcome you.

1. The Mountains of the Moon are known to fame;
   A mount on Mars the gorgeous East can claim.
2. A tree it is. And if you change its head,
   One of the months is visible instead.
3. Milk flows like water—it is water here,
   Where Beauty dwells, her sole companion Beer.
4. An island study, hard indeed is it,
   With thoughts of thieving in the opposite.
5. Subsistence, stronghold, celebrate, remain,
   Continue, manage, practise, guard, maintain.

PAX.

Answers to Acrostic No. 119 should be addressed to the Acrostic Editor, THE STRAND MAGAZINE, *Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C.2, and must arrive not later than by the first post on June 8th.*

To every light one alternative answer may be sent; it should be written at the side. At the foot of his answer every solver should write his pseudonym and nothing else.

ANSWER TO DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 118.

1.	R	i	P
2.	E	the	R
3.	V	alparais	O
4.	O	utstri	P
5.	L	ydi	A
6.	U	nfeelin	G
7.	T	og	A
8.	I	nventio	N
9.	O	gdoa	D
10.	N	erol	I
11.	A	rra	S
12.	R	ou	T
13.	Y	ak	S

NOTES.—Light 1. Rip Van Winkle. 2. The spelling, æther, would be useless. 5. Soft Lydian airs, Milton; Pactolus, in Lydia; Acts xvi. Light 8. Necessity. 10. Oily perfume, distilled from bitter orange peel. 11. Hamlet.

TWENTY-SECOND SERIES: RESULT.

Acrostic No. 116 proved extremely difficult: one solver sent a correct answer, and every other competitor failed in two or more lights. The full score for the series was 33; Perky obtained this number, and wins the first prize, six guineas. Corisande, Franz, Junius, Mancu, Silex, and Zuz all scored 31; three of them are ineligible for prizes this time, and so the other three—Corisande, Mancu, Zuz—share the remaining prizes, and will receive two guineas each. Perky will be ineligible for a prize during the twenty-third and twenty-fourth series, and the other winners during the twenty-third series, now running.

The successful competitors are: Perky, Mr. A. T. Hill, Incents, Chesham Road, Berkhamsted, Herts; Corisande, Mrs. Bridges, 7, Alexandra Road, Clifton, Bristol; Mancu, Mr. L. A. Jones, Asterley, Goldsmid Road, Tonbridge; Zuz, Mrs. Hudleston, 19, Canynge Road, Clifton, Bristol.

THE TERRIBLE HOBBY OF SIR JOSEPH LONDE, BART.—3.

THE HOUSE ON SALISBURY PLAIN

BY

E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM

ILLUSTRATED BY S. SEYMOUR LUCAS

A MAN brought his Ford motor-car to a standstill before a sign-post on the dreariest part of Salisbury Plain at about nine o'clock on a wild, blustery night. He had pulled up abruptly on seeing the sign-post, and perplexity was written in his face. To his surprise, the Bruntingford direction pointed to a road on his left—a broad road, hedgeless and ditchless like all the others. There was no doubt whatever that the sign-post read—

"BRUNTINGFORD 7 MILES"

—and sign-posts cannot lie. Richard Bryan stepped back into his car, reversed for a few yards, and took the indicated route, but from the first he was not happy. From the roar of the wind in his face he knew that he was travelling northwards, when he should have been travelling due east. Consequently, when he saw lights shining from the windows of a tall, shadowy house on his left, he jammed on his brakes and brought the car to a standstill. As he made his way towards the house he became convinced that, so far as that sign-post was concerned, he must have been under some hallucination. There was no such house as this on the road to Bruntingford.

It struck him, as he stood there in the darkness, that the silence of the place was almost extraordinary.

The door was opened in due course, and a powerful man, well dressed in country tweeds, looked out. He seemed somewhat surprised to see his visitor, but his tone was courteous.

"What can I do for you?" he inquired.

"Sorry to trouble you, sir," Bryan replied, "but I have rather lost my way. The sign-post seemed to say that this was right for Bruntingford, but I feel sure that I am on the wrong road."

"Come inside, please," the other begged. "I am afraid that the wind will blow out my lamp."

Bryan obeyed, and the door was immediately closed. The hall was in darkness, but light came flooding out from a room on the left-hand side. The tenant of the house pointed courteously towards it.

"Step in for one moment," he invited. "You are on the wrong road for Bruntingford. I can easily put you right, though. I have a map in my study."

Richard Bryan was a stolid, unimaginative young man who had served behind the counter of a small draper's shop during his earlier life, spent two years at a London warehouse, and was now only a moderately successful traveller. His was a life lived in small ways amongst small people. He had scarcely ever read a book of fiction since he had left school. Yet, as he stood there, he had a queer feeling of insecurity, a nervous dread of penetrating farther into this partially occupied house.

"Much obliged, sir," he said, "but there's no need for me to keep you. I didn't think this was the right road, somehow. I'll just step back to the cross-roads."

"I'll show you your exact route on my map," the older man replied, throwing open the door. "Come in and warm your hands for a moment."

The traveller had not the courage to

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yield to the one nervous instinct of his life. He crossed the threshold of the room—a very large and lofty apartment, bare enough at one end, but with couches, easy-chairs, a multitude of books, and a great log fire at the other. Reclining on cushions before it, half risen now at his entrance, was a woman who even in that light seemed to him more than ordinarily beautiful—a woman dressed in a dull green tea-gown, who looked at him with strange eyes.

"Gentleman lost his way motoring, my dear," his companion explained, cheerfully. "Sit down for a moment, sir, whilst I get my map. I can show you in a minute where you went wrong. Will you have a whisky-and-soda?"

This was an invitation which Richard Bryan seldom refused, and which he had never felt less inclined to refuse than at the present moment. He sat on the edge of his chair and watched the tenant of the house mix his drink at the sideboard.

"Is it very cold driving?" asked the woman, softly.

"Bitterly, ma'am," he answered. "I've crossed the Plain a good many times in the way of business, and when this north wind blows it fairly goes through you."

"Come nearer to the fire," she invited. "If you have crossed the Plain so often, how is it that you have lost your way?"

"That's what I can't quite figure out myself," he acknowledged. "I was going on all right until I got to the cross-roads close here and saw the sign pointing down this road for Bruntingford. I couldn't understand it, for I could have sworn the way was straight on. However, I came down here, and everything looked so unfamiliar that I stopped at the first house I could find to know what was wrong. . . . Here's good health, ma'am and sir," he added, raising the glass which had just been brought to him to his lips.

"Good health to you, sir," was the courteous rejoinder. "You need not be afraid of my whisky. It is not pre-war, but it is good."

The traveller drank, and set his glass down empty. All the time he fancied that he could see the woman's eyes glowing as she watched him, and he was conscious of a queer sensation of excitement. Surely the whisky must have been very strong! It was absurd, but the strength seemed to be going from his legs. He tried to speak and found it difficult. The other man had opened a cupboard and returned with a small smelling-bottle. He took out the stopper carefully and held it for a moment to Richard Bryan's nostrils. The latter sat there with staring eyes, mumbling senseless words.

"A very ordinary type," the woman murmured.

"Naturally, my dear," the man agreed. "A traveller, no doubt, peddling between the villages."

"You had better go and see to things," she enjoined. "I will stay here and watch him. It amuses me when he tries to talk."

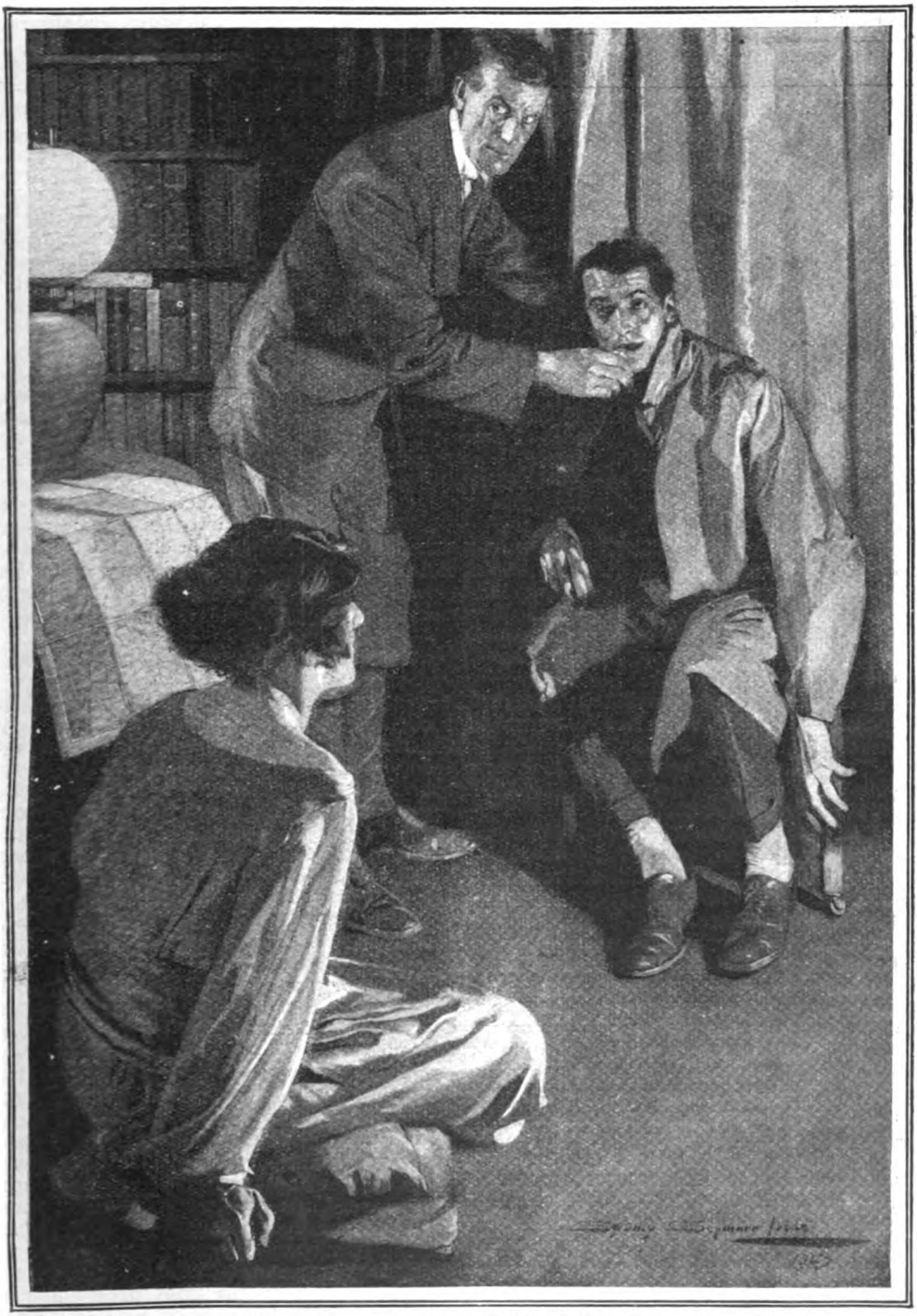
He nodded assent and left the room with scarcely another glance at Mr. Richard Bryan. He put on an overcoat, and made his way out through the windy darkness to where the car was standing. With the air of an expert, he mounted to the driver's seat and drove her on the reverse until there was room to turn. Then he made his way back to the main road, turned a little to the left, and drove a short distance along to a rise in the road which left the pasture four or five yards below. He drove the car to within an inch of the bank, descended, put her in first speed, turned the wheel slightly, and, leaning over, pressed the accelerator. The car started with a jerk, turned over and over, and lay at the bottom of the bank, upside down, half-way across a small stream. He turned and retraced his steps, pausing at the sign-post to swing it back to its proper position, tramped the ground down with his feet where its foundations had been disturbed, and returned to his house. Richard Bryan was still seated in his chair, swaying a little and muttering to himself. The woman was watching him and laughing.

"He's trying to sell me blouses!" she exclaimed. "You really ought to make a fortune out of that drug of yours, Joseph. The man is quite sensible in his way, but every now and then he believes he is somewhere else."

"Very interesting," was the smiling reply. "We will leave him where he is for a quarter of an hour, whilst I finish my chapter. He will not disturb us."

It was a quaint trio grouped around the fireplace. The woman was watching the drugged man, a smile of amusement playing about her lips at his struggles to return to sanity. Londe, in an easy-chair, with his feet upon the high fender, was reading with eager attention a chapter in the latest book of medical science. Bryan, numbed in body and brain, with flashes, every now and then, of realization, unable to form coherent words but none the less oppressed with fear, gibbered. Sometimes the end of a log fell off on to the hearth.

ANN, seated alone in her little outside office, was buried in a newspaper. Daniel, coming in after two hours spent at the British Museum, found her



He held the smelling-bottle for a moment to Richard Bryan's nostrils. The latter sat there with staring eyes, mumbling senseless words.

there, and paused on his way to his own sanctum.

"Fashions?" he asked.

She shook her head.

"Murder," she answered.

Daniel frowned.

"If you want sensationalism," he suggested, "I should try Gaboriau or Sue. There is a crudeness about these modern crimes which makes them a most monotonous study."

"Have you read what they call the Salisbury Plain mystery?"

"I haven't seen a paper for a week. I am so afraid that I should have to make up my mind on the Irish question."

"You neglect a great deal when you leave the newspapers so severely alone," Ann told him. "In your profession——"

"Don't be silly," Daniel interrupted. "My profession is that of a reader of code manuscripts."

"It seems to me," she observed, "that you have a nervous fear of being called a detective."

"Well, I'm not a detective," he answered, irritably. "I am affiliated with that branch of the Criminal Investigation Department which goes by the name of Q 20, and that's a different thing altogether. As a matter of fact, I have done nothing but decode manuscripts for a month."

"And found it pretty dull," she remarked, coolly. "I can always tell when you're bored."

"I'm not bored," he retorted. "It's my liver."

She shrugged her shoulders.

"Would you like to know about the Salisbury Plain mystery?" she asked.

"If you can tell it me in a few words," he answered. "I'm not going to read the newspaper accounts."

"The Salisbury Plain mystery is briefly this," she recounted. "Richard Bryan, a commonplace, unadventurous commercial traveller, left Wincanton at about three o'clock one afternoon last week for Bruntingford, where he meant to stay the night. He had with him samples of drapery and he drove a Ford motor-car. The next morning his car was found overturned by the side of the road in one of the loneliest parts of the district, and he himself was found close to it, almost unrecognizable and quite dead."

"Why unrecognizable?" Daniel inquired.

"Because of terrible injuries to the back of his head," she explained. "Every account affirms that the injuries were far more terrible than could have been caused by any accident. Further than that, the roads were dry, there was no sign of any skid, the night, though windy, was not dark, the lamps of the car were in order, and the man was a highly capable driver."

"Any money about?"

"All the money he had with him and some cheques in his possession were found in his pocket-book."

"Luggage? Samples?"

"Untouched—lying with the wreck of the car."

"Anything in the man's private life to suggest an enemy?"

"Not a chance of it," she answered. "He was a dull little man, living a dull little life. His only ambition seems to have been to some day own a shop of his own."

"It sounds queer," Daniel admitted.

"It is queer," she agreed.

"It's a police job, anyway," Daniel concluded, passing on into his sanctum. "You can show Professor Mayer into my room when he arrives. I've done some good work for him to-day."

"Very good, Mr. Rocke."

Daniel passed on into his private office, lit a pipe, and studied a cipher which had been sent in from his old department. Miss Lancaster resumed her study of the Salisbury Plain mystery.

THE young man got off his bicycle and stared at the sign-post.

"BRUNTINGFORD 7 MILES," he read. "Well, I'm damned!"

He drew a map from his pocket and sat considering it. When he had folded it up, he was still in doubt. It had been raining off and on, but the sun was shining now and the air moist and hot. He took out a handkerchief which had seen much service and wiped his forehead. He eased the knapsack on his shoulders and mounted his bicycle again. He took the road which, according to the sign-post, led to Bruntingford.

"I'll stop at the first farmhouse I come to and see if they'll give me some tea," he decided. "I shall know for certain where I am then."

The first house he came to gave him to think. It stood some distance back from the road and was very much larger than the ordinary farmhouse. It had once, without doubt, been a mansion of repute, but it had apparently fallen now upon evil days. Three-quarters of the place seemed to be shut up. The young man, whose name was Harry Dawson, was not of the genus who are afraid of snubs, so he wheeled his bicycle up to the front door and rang the bell. His hopes were a little dashed, however, when he found himself confronted, a few seconds later, by an exceedingly well-dressed and very beautiful woman,

not at all a likely dispenser of cheap hospitalities.

"Beg your pardon, I'm sure," Dawson declared. "I was looking for a farmhouse where I could get a cup of tea."

"Pray come in," the lady invited, smiling. "I will give you one, with pleasure."

The young man hesitated. He was a Cockney, and he was nearing the end of his holiday.

"I was thinking of something about ninepence," he explained, "with plenty of bread and butter."

"That will be quite all right," the lady promised him.

He leaned his bicycle against the outside wall and followed her into the house. She led him into a large, partially-furnished room. A man, apparently of her own station in life, who was writing at a table, looked up inquiringly.

"This young gentleman," she announced, "wants some tea, with plenty of bread and butter. You can sit down here," she told him, "while I go and get it for you."

"Look here," Harry Dawson queried, twirling his cap in his hand, "something a bit wrong here, ain't there? Making fun of me, eh? This isn't a farmhouse or an inn."

"Never mind," the lady answered, with a smile, "you shall have your tea."

He looked at her in silent admiration. She had the most amazing eyes he had ever seen, and the most beautiful deep golden hair. Then he unslung his knapsack and hung it over the back of a chair.

"Well, I'm not going to kick," he declared. "It's your look-out, anyway. Ninepence is all I can run to, for I've another night's bed and supper to pay for. I thought I'd have been up in London to-night, but the weather was bad in Devonshire and the roads were horrid."

The woman had left the room, presumably to get the tea. The man rose to his feet, insisted upon his visitor taking an easy-chair, and seated himself opposite.

"Are you on a bicycling tour?" he asked.

"You've got it in one, guv'nor," was the prompt response. "I've had a fortnight's holiday, and this is my last day but one. Name of Harry Dawson. I've a berth with Townem and Gillard, wholesale drapers, in St. Paul's Churchyard."

"I trust," his temporary host remarked, "that you have enjoyed your tour?"

"Pretty fair," Mr. Harry Dawson acknowledged. "A cycling tour ain't what it used to be, though. These cars have come along, and the prices of everything's gone up on the road. It will have to be the roadside for yours truly to-night, unless I can find a cheaper pub."

"How much farther did you think of going before you put up for the night?" the other inquired.

"Another ten or a dozen miles," was the unenthusiastic reply. "Place called Bruntingford, a bit farther on, I thought I might get to."

THE tea was a wonderful success, and after the tea came a whisky-and-soda. The visitor rose to leave with the utmost reluctance.

"I'll have to toddle on a bit," he announced. "It's almost dark now. What's the damage?"

The woman with the wonderful eyes laughed at him.

"My dear young man," she remonstrated, "we don't want any money. We've plenty of our own. It's lonely here, and we're glad to see anyone."

"If you put it that way, ma'am," Mr. Harry Dawson acquiesced, promptly, "it suits me down to the ground."

"Why not stay with us for the night?" she suggested. "We'll give you some dinner and a bed and charge you nothing. You can start at what time you like in the morning."

"Is this on the square?" the young man asked.

"Absolutely," she laughed. "I've a good cook, and I promise that you shall enjoy your dinner."

The invited guest smiled amiably.

"I'll promise you that myself," he declared. "This is the biggest stroke of luck I've had these holidays."

The statement was, in view of later events, a little rash, but, nevertheless, Mr. Harry Dawson fared well that night. He ate food which was strange to him, ate it with appetite and in prodigious quantities. He drank wines which had been only a dream. He smoked cigars, roasted himself in front of the fire, and told them the story of his life several times over. When he went to bed after a final whisky-and-soda, he was most certainly unsteady on his feet. He slept at first deeply. Afterwards he must have had a nightmare. He fancied that he awoke to find himself being carried, by the dark, strong-looking man who had been his host, across the landing into another room—a bathroom, apparently. He was stretched upon a long trestle, and before he knew what was happening he was being tied to it. Even for a nightmare this was too much. He began to scream. Then he felt something pushed into his mouth, and the screams were choked. His host was standing over him in a long white coat. He held something in his hand which he had taken from a case—a short knife.

The lamplight flashed upon its blue blade.

"You need not be alarmed," his host assured him, courteously. "You have something which I need and which is of little use to you. Better close your eyes for a moment." . . .

It was a very horrible nightmare.

ANN was standing by the side of her employer's desk. The fingers which clutched the newspaper which she laid down before him were trembling a little.

"Is this still only a police job?" she asked.

Daniel adjusted his tortoiseshell-rimmed spectacles and read. The paragraph was headed :—

ANOTHER TRAGEDY ON SALISBURY PLAIN. SECOND UNDISCOVERED MURDER WITHIN A MONTH.

It went on to describe the finding of the body of a Mr. Harry Dawson, the youth whose disappearance had been recorded a few weeks ago, partially dressed, and with terrible injuries to the head, recalling in a most amazing manner the condition of the man Bryan whose corpse had previously been discovered within a few hundred yards of the same spot. The body was found under a clump of bushes, some distance from the road, in one of the loneliest parts of the Plain, visited only occasionally by shepherds or cattle-tenders.

Daniel took off his spectacles and reached for the telephone.

"This must be investigated from our point of view at once," he admitted. "Please step out to the bookshop next door, Miss Lancaster, and buy me a map of Wiltshire. I will telephone for the car."

"Shall you communicate with Scotland Yard?" she asked.

He considered the point for a moment.

"I think not," he decided—"not just at present. They would probably take a purely official view of the matter, and would not approve of any independent investigations. I shall just look round myself first."

"We," Ann murmured.

Daniel frowned.

"Salisbury Plain is a very lonely place," he objected, "and the man we are in search of is dangerous. I think it would be better for you to wait here."

"That is a pity," she remarked, "because I am coming with you."

He frowned again.

"I am starting in half an hour," he warned her.

"I shall be ready in less than half that time," she rejoined.

He drew the telephone nearer to him.

"Go and get the map, then," he directed. "I am ordering the car round at once."

THEY lunched at Amesbury, and after a further inspection of the map Daniel decided to make it their headquarters. There were a few travelling Americans and English tourists in the room, and a sprinkling of archæologists, of all of whom Daniel took note with interest. After lunch he went himself to fetch his car from the garage, and spent a few minutes in the yard of the hotel and in the smoke-room. When they started on their afternoon's expedition, he was a little preoccupied.

After driving for a considerable distance, he brought the car to a standstill behind two others already drawn up by the side of the road, and pointed to a little group of three or four people about a mile away.

"That, I suppose," he said, "is where the young man's body was found."

She looked steadfastly across in the direction to which he pointed.

"What are they doing there?" she inquired.

"Morbid curiosity, I should imagine," he answered. "The police have had their turn. I suppose the general public are allowed to divert themselves now."

He thrust his hand into the pocket of his motoring-coat, drew out a pair of field-glasses, and scrutinized the little group for a moment. Then he replaced them in his pocket and drove slowly off. About a mile farther on he halted at some cross-roads.

"That is the ditch," he pointed out, "where Richard Bryan, the commercial traveller, and his overturned car were found."

"How do you know these things?" she asked, curiously.

"I made inquiries at Amesbury," he told her. "It was very simple to recognize the spot—just short of these cross-roads."

He descended from the car and strolled on towards the sign-post. He examined this for a few moments carefully. The turf around it was disturbed, and the sign-post itself had evidently been blown down and replaced.

"If anyone desired," he remarked, "to have a practical joke with travellers, it would be quite easy. See!"

He swung the post round. The way to Bruntingford now — the village through which they had recently passed—was apparently down the lonely track which seemed to lead into the heart of the Plain and nowhere else.

"Quite simple, you see," he went on. "Below, in the dip there, is a house. Any man who was not quite sure of his way

would naturally call to inquire there. That, I should imagine, is what Mr. Richard Bryan did, and also, probably, this Mr. Harry Dawson. Unless I am very much mistaken, that house is tenanted by——"

"By whom?" Ann cried.

"By Sir Joseph and Lady Londe!"

She stared down towards the spot where the road suddenly fell out of sight.

"Are we going there now?" she asked.

"Not I!" was the gruff reply. "I've had a taste of that lunatic's methods."

"Then what are we going to do?"

Daniel led the way back to the car.

"Drive round a little and think things over," he answered. "There's plenty of time."

"Don't leave it too long," Ann advised, anxiously.

"We'll do something to-morrow," he promised.

DURING their drive, however, Daniel changed his mind. He called at a local police-station of importance and asked to see the Chief. He was received by a tall, stiff-looking personage, with a fair moustache and an exceedingly self-assured manner.

"What can I do for you, Mr—er—Rocke?" he asked, glancing at the card.

"Do you remember the outrages at Dredley?" Daniel inquired. "The criminal was supposed to be a famous Australian surgeon—Sir Joseph Londe."

"Quite well," the inspector acknowledged. "The police down in Surrey weren't very smart."

"You have a chance of atoning for them," Daniel observed. "Sir Joseph Londe and his wife are living at Homans Hall, about fourteen miles away, close to the scene of these two murders. He is probably responsible for them."

The inspector smiled.

"We have already solved the mystery of those murders, Mr. Rocke," he announced. "I can put my hand on two of the men to-morrow. I am waiting to try and get the third."

"Indeed?" Daniel murmured.

"Soldiers from the barracks," the inspector went on. "I knew that from the first. Fitting things together wasn't quite so easy, but we shall be taking the men to Salisbury within the next few days."

"Dear me!" Daniel exclaimed, under his breath.

"As regards the occupants of Homans Hall," the inspector continued, twirling his moustache, "you are mistaken in this matter also. Their name is Charlton, they come from Tunbridge Wells, the man is an antiquarian and a scholar, and I happen to know that the lady was in Amesbury, looking for servants and shopping, only yesterday. You'll excuse my suggesting, sir, that you should be a little careful before making such statements."

"I do not make them without conviction," Daniel replied. "I was in the Foreign Office for some years. I have been a King's Messenger. I have served in the Secret Service and in the Intelligence Department, and I am now attached to the new department which you may have heard of—Q 20."

The inspector was unperturbed and unimpressed.

"Quite so," he murmured. "All the same, you have got hold of a mare's-nest this time, Mr. Rocke. You have been chiefly concerned, no doubt, with foreign matters. I think you'll find the police in this country are quite able to run their own affairs. There are no crimes left undetected for very long in this neighbourhood, and, if you'll excuse my saying so, sir, we haven't any particular fancy for the interference of amateurs."

Daniel picked up his hat.

"Very well," he said; "you're making a great mistake, and you're throwing away the chance of earning a handsome reward."

The inspector's smile was maddening.

"I'll risk that, sir," he declared.

THERE was a fair sprinkling of diners that night in the pleasant little coffee-room of the hotel. The head-waiter, who was in a gossipy frame of mind, paid a good deal of attention to Daniel.

"We get an interesting crowd here sometimes, sir," he confided. "The gentleman in the corner, with spectacles, is an Oxford professor with his wife. The three ladies are Americans, all spinsters, who are, I believe, going round the world. The two young ladies, sir, are artists."

"And the gentleman in the other corner?" Daniel inquired.

"Professor Philip H. Thomson, sir," the man replied. "He is from Harvard University. . . . Coffee in the lounge, sir?"

"If you please."

Daniel sipped his coffee, lit a cigarette, glanced through the evening paper, exchanged a few remarks with Ann, and, with a whispered excuse to her, made his way towards where the Harvard professor was seated. The latter was a tall, spare man, with jet-black hair, and he wore rimless spectacles.

"How do you do, Professor Thomson?" Daniel said.

"How are you, Mr. Rocke?" was the quiet but cordial reply. "My name, as I imagine you know, is Windergate."

Daniel dropped into a chair by his side.

"You're not interfering with the local police, I hope?" he remarked.

Mr. Windergate smiled.

"They're going to arrest some soldiers," he confided.

"A very natural error. You understand, Mr. Windergate, that my interest in this is personal, not official—personal because the man who murdered these two fellows pretty nearly had me."

"The Australian surgeon?" Windergate asked, like a flash.

Daniel nodded.

"He is living alone with his wife in a lonely house close to the scene of the murders. Have you authority enough to take him?"

"I should say so!" Windergate replied. "Now tell me all about it. I've had my eye on that part of the country."

"Do you mind my secretary joining us?" Daniel inquired. "To tell you the truth, her father was one of Londe's victims, and it was she who first spotted this thing. If there's any question of the reward, for instance, I'm not a claimant myself, but I should like her to be considered."

"The reward will be yours or hers, as you arrange," the detective assented, rising to his feet. "I'm only thankful to be let in at the death, instead of having these country poops do the shouting."

Mr. Windergate was introduced to Ann, and carried the little company off to his sitting-room, where he drank in every word of Daniel's story with prompt credulity.

"We'll have him to-morrow morning," the pseudo-Professor Thomson declared. "We'll have him in Salisbury Jail while these pumpkins keep their eyes on the soldiers."

Ann looked grave.

"I don't know whether Mr. Rocke has told you," she said, "that this man Londe is enormously strong."

The detective smiled.

"Two armed men," he observed, "are a match for one at any time. I expect Mr. Rocke has been in a scrap or two before."

"I think you ought to make a certainty of the matter," Ann persisted. "Londe will certainly show fight. Why run the risk? Besides, he's so clever. Think how he escaped from Elton Lodge!"

Mr. Windergate stretched out his arm—his muscles were like iron.

"I was heavy-weight champion of the Police Force up to last year," he said, "and I learnt to draw my gun on the Mexican border. Londe is far more likely to escape from a crowd than from us two. I don't know how long you've known Mr. Rocke, Miss Lancaster, but I remember hearing of a scrap he had on the Cologne train, when he was doing King's Messenger work, which rather impressed me. You leave it to us."

"I'm inclined to think myself," Daniel put in, "that the intervention of the local police might be unfortunate."

"I suppose you know best," Ann acquiesced, a little doubtfully. "When do you propose to go?"

The detective glanced at his watch.

"We dined early," he said. "It's only twenty past eight now. I propose that we don't wait until to-morrow morning—that we start right away. You'd better take your two-seater, Mr. Rocke, and I'll take mine."

"You're not going to leave me at home?" Ann expostulated.

"If Miss Lancaster will promise to remain outside," Windergate suggested, "there is no reason why she should not accompany us."

Ann rose to her feet.

"I shall be ready in five minutes," she agreed.

IT was about a quarter past nine when they dropped down the hill at the foot of which Homans Hall reared its inhospitable front towards the road. It was not yet dark, though an edge of the moon was showing. As the two cars drew to a standstill, Windergate pointed with a gesture of satisfaction to the chimneys, from which smoke was issuing.

"The house is still inhabited, at any rate," he remarked. "Come along, Mr. Rocke."

Daniel sprang to the ground, touched his starting lever to be sure that it was out of gear, pushed the brake on another notch, and smiled encouragingly at Ann. She was looking a little distressed.

"You're sure you have your revolver?" she asked.

He nodded.

"And some spare cartridges in the other pocket."

"Well, good luck to you!" she said, bravely.

The two men walked up to the front door and rang the bell. Both adopted expedients which they deemed suitable to the occasion. They stood one on either side of the broad entrance, flat against the wall. In his right hand each clasped his revolver. In a few moments they saw the flickering light of a lamp being carried down the hall. The door was opened. The woman with the strange eyes stood there, peering out. She was wearing a tea-gown of dull-coloured silk, and the light of the lamp flashed upon her beautiful hair. She looked a little vaguely at the two men.

"If anyone desired," he remarked, as he swung the post round, "to have a practical joke with travellers, it would be quite easy. See!"

"Can we see your husband?" Daniel asked.

If she recognized him, she made no sign.

"Certainly," she replied. "Won't you come in? Have you lost your way?"

"Not exactly."

She led them across the hall to the study and pushed open the door.

"My husband is here," she announced. "Joseph, here are two gentlemen who wish to speak to you."

Londe looked up and rose to his feet.

"Dear me!" he exclaimed, with perfect composure. "An old friend, I believe? This is a lonely spot in which you have found me out."

He motioned towards chairs, but they both remained standing. Londe still showed not the slightest signs of uneasiness.

"I believe I am right?" he went on pleasantly. "It is Mr. Daniel Rocke, is it not? We were on the point of trying a little experiment together once when your—er—nerve failed you."

"You were on the point of murdering me, Sir Joseph Londe," Daniel rejoined, sternly.

The man frowned. The woman looked up from the chair into which she had sunk, and shook her head with a gesture of dissent.

"I wish you would not use that absurd word," Londe declared, irritably. "There was no question of murder at all. I have been for years trying to find a very small portion of a human brain to take the place of a damaged portion of my own. It is an exceedingly simple matter, the exchange, but I am most unfortunate. Nearly every brain I have come across is discoloured. I have arrived at the conclusion that the whole human race is suffering from some mysterious affliction."

"Sir Joseph Londe," Daniel said, "we can discuss those matters later. The object of my present visit is to ask you officially, if you please—this gentleman with me is Mr. Windergate, of Scotland Yard—whether you know anything of the disappearance of Richard Bryan and Harry Dawson, and the subsequent murder of both of them? You need not say anything which you think will incriminate you, but——"

"Stop! stop!" Londe interrupted. "I beg that you will not continue to annoy me by the use of that ridiculous word. The two young men you mention were both disappointments. I performed the operation myself upstairs here, but in each case the result was grievous. If your friend—Mr. Windergate, I think you said his name was—is interested in surgery——"

"Sir Joseph Londe," Windergate interposed, "we do not wish to hear anything more, if you please. You will have to come with me to Salisbury—you and your wife."

"What, to-night?"

"Now," Windergate insisted.

Londe rose to his feet.

"This visit is really most untimely, gentlemen," he complained. "I had a young man coming to see me to-morrow who would have made an excellent subject. Besides, there is no one in the house, and I have very many valuable manuscripts here."

"You will have to come with us to Salisbury, Sir Joseph," Windergate repeated. "I should be glad if you would make such preparations as you desire to make at once."

LONDE turned to his wife.

"You hear what these gentlemen say, my dear?" he asked, querulously. "Of course, I can easily persuade any intelligent person that what I have done to restore the vacuum in my brain was absolutely justified. Still, it is a nuisance to have to make this journey."

The woman folded up her knitting and rose to her feet.

"This gentleman," she said, looking at Daniel, her eyes reproachful and her tone one of tender regret, "has never been very kind to us. However, we will go. It will be a little change."

They moved towards the door. Windergate preceded them, Daniel brought up the rear. They climbed the broad staircase. Sir Joseph threw open the door of a large bedroom.

"My wife and I are unfortunately without servants at the present moment," he explained. "You will see that this apartment is shared by both of us. It will be necessary to ask you gentlemen to withdraw while we make ready for the journey."

Windergate hesitated. The silence in the house seemed to indicate the truth of Londe's statement as to the absence of servants.

"I can assure you, gentlemen," the latter continued, "that there is no means of escape from this room, if we wished to escape, which we certainly do not. There is another door, but that only leads to the back stairs, and the exit from the back stairs is within sight of the hall. We will not be more than ten minutes."

"We will await you in the hall," Windergate decided.

"Is it an open car?" the woman asked.

"I am afraid that it is."

"I shall be three or four minutes longer then," she remarked, with a little grimace. "I must really put on some warm things."

"I have a motoring outfit somewhere," Londe observed. "We will not keep you longer than we can help. You will find whisky and soda upon the sideboard."

The two men descended to the hall and seated themselves upon a bench which commanded both the back stairs and the front ones.

"He is absolutely mad," Windergate murmured. "Getting worse every day, I should say."

Daniel nodded.

"The trouble of it is," he pointed out, "that he is as sane as he can be upon every other subject. He saved hundreds of lives during the war—he and his wife between them. The work they did was prodigious. You know, of course, that they were both sent to an asylum afterwards and discharged as cured."

"It is a very interesting case," Windergate admitted. "They'll never hang him. He's a lunatic, beyond a doubt."

In a quarter of an hour's time the man and the woman descended the stairs. They were wrapped from head to foot in motoring coats. The woman wore a voluminous veil and the man a closely-fitting cap with ear-flaps and celluloid spectacles. Windergate rose to his feet.

"You will excuse me, sir," he begged, "but I must search you for arms before we start."

Londe held up his hands with a little gesture of impatience. Windergate felt him all over. Then he nodded.

"Quite all right," he said. "This way."

They started for Salisbury in gloomy silence. In front was Daniel's car, with the woman by his side and Ann in the dicky. Behind came Windergate and the man, who had lit a cigar and was leaning back with folded arms, unperturbed and undismayed. The moon had risen now, and the road was clearly visible, except where the shadows from the trees threw black gulfs across the road. They drove on through several villages, until before them they saw in the distance little pinpricks of light and the vague outline of a city. Suddenly Ann leaned forward and touched Daniel on the arm.

"Will you stop a minute, please?" she begged.

They were on a straight piece of road, with open country on either side of them. Daniel thrust out his hand, slowed down, and brought his car to a standstill. The other car followed suit.

"What's wrong?" Daniel demanded, a little impatiently.

"The woman by your side," Ann declared, "is not Londe's wife."

Daniel started. The woman began to laugh. He tore off her veil. Then he sprang to the side of the other car. The man, relieved now by Windergate of his spectacles and cap, leaned back and laughed hoarsely.

"What's wrong, guv'nor?" he asked. "I thought we were to have a ride to Salisbury?"

Daniel had lost his temper. He thrust the cold muzzle of his revolver against the man's cheek.

"If you don't tell me the truth," he threatened, "I'll blow your head off!"

The man cowered back.

"Look here," he protested, "no violence. I've done nothing wrong—more has my wife."

"Your story, man—quick!" Daniel insisted.

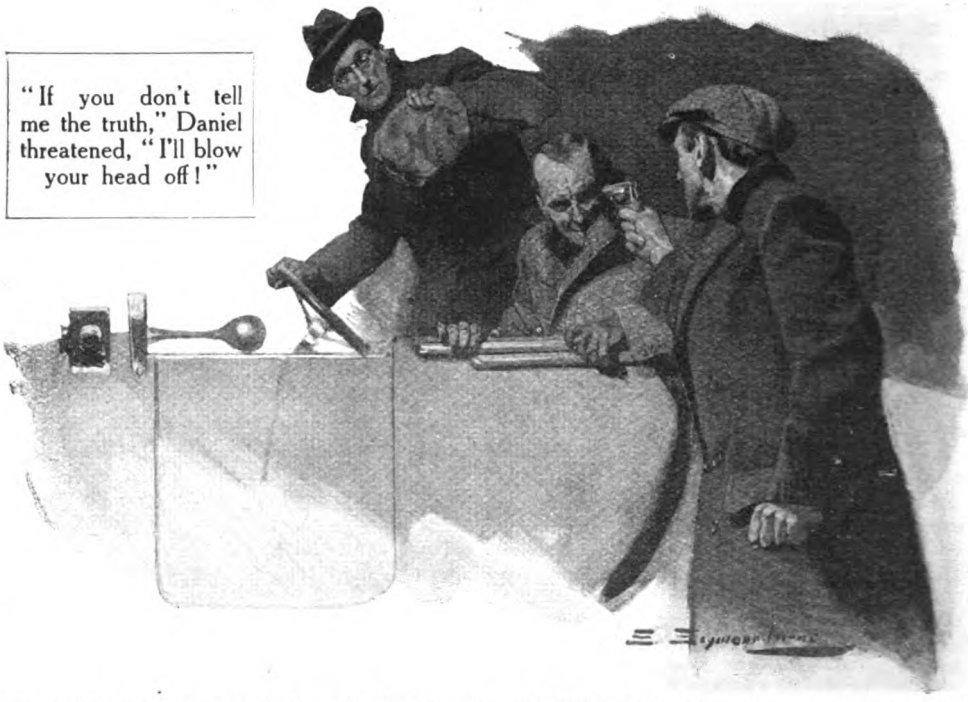
"Well, my wife and I were both engaged at the asylum near Bruntingford where Sir Joseph and Lady Londe were patients some years ago," the man said. "Folks used to say that I was rather like him, but that's neither here nor there. I heard tell of some people living at Homans Hall who, one of the gardeners at Bruntingford insisted, had been in the asylum. So my wife and I, having a day off, went to see them last Thursday. The fact of the matter is, we'd got the sack, and I thought if these two really were Sir Joseph Londe and his missis, as seemed likely enough from what the gardener told us, there might be something in it for us. We were hidden away in the kitchen part of the house and told to keep quiet. This morning we were both rigged out, I in some of his clothes, and Susan—my wife—in some of her ladyship's. To cut a long story short, they engaged us at ten pounds a day to lay tight in the room next to theirs and do exactly as we were told. An hour ago we were told that we had to be taken into Salisbury and keep up the bluff of being Londe and his missis as long as we could."

THEY left the man and woman there in the road, shouting and complaining. Daniel's was the faster car, and he and Ann raced up to the gate of Homans Hall some distance ahead of Windergate. There were no lights in the house, which stood there black and deserted. By the time Windergate arrived he found Daniel, his revolver in one hand and an electric torch in the other, coming across the field.

"I've searched the house!" Daniel groaned. "They've gone, right enough! If they'd had to fight, they meant to do it from their bedroom. There's a regular barricade there, and a whole case of cartridges."

Windergate pointed to the open doors of the cow-shed.

"That's where they kept their car," he



"If you don't tell me the truth," Daniel threatened, "I'll blow your head off!"

declared. "I've traced the wheels across the field."

They hurried to the gate. There were indications that the car had been driven to the left, along the deserted road which led past the house to the few scattered villages almost in the centre of the Plain. They prepared at once to follow.

"We could do with the local men now," Windergate remarked, "but we may have luck."

Daniel started away first. He was scarcely half-way up the dip, however, when his right tyre went off with a report like a pistol-shot, and his two-seater skidded almost across the road. As he brought her to a standstill, he heard a similar sound from behind, twice repeated. He looked around in time to see the other car skid into the ditch, and Windergate himself thrown out, fortunately on to the grass. They searched the road a moment or two later—Windergate, his clothes caked in fresh mud, and the blood streaming from a cut on his temple.

"The whole place is strewn with broken glass and nails," the latter muttered. "Next time I try to arrest a lunatic, I'll take a posse of police!"

LATE on the following afternoon, Daniel and Ann drove slowly through the streets of Amesbury and drew up before the hotel. They had left Windergate at Salisbury. The inspector with the fair moustache, who was standing upon the pavement, recognized Daniel and saluted him with a somewhat condescending smile.

"Any luck, sir?" he asked.

"Not exactly," Daniel replied. "How are you getting on?"

"I've got them as good as fixed, sir. You'll read all about it in a day or two. They've been trying for leave. Nothing doing! I've got the net over them all right."

Daniel smiled—the first time for a good many hours.

"You local fellows can give us all points," he admitted.

A boy ran across the road, bare-headed, from the police-station.

"Chief Constable speaking from Salisbury, sir," he announced.

"When you've heard what he has to say, inspector," Daniel remarked, mildly, "you may feel inclined to come over and have a chat with me about those soldiers."

(Another story in this thrilling series will appear next month.)

Schumann and Chopin

"MY FAVOURITE COMPOSERS"

by

BENNO MOISEIWITSCH

With comments by

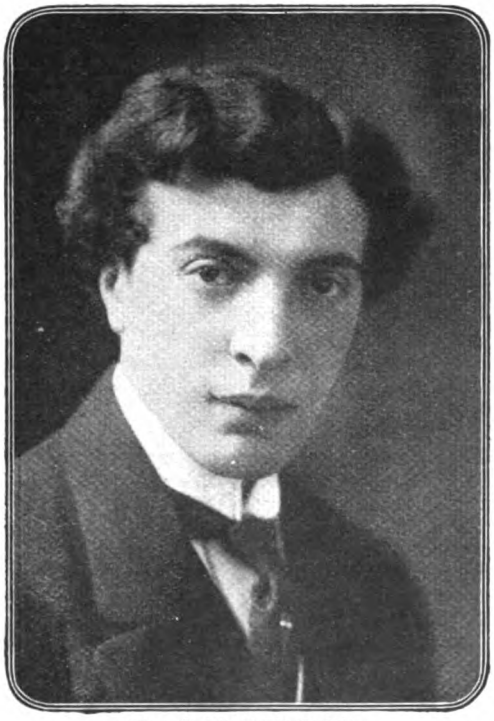
SIR LANDON RONALD, MARK HAMBOURG, IRENE SCHARRER, SIR FREDERIC COWEN and ERNEST NEWMAN.

WHEN an artist like Mr. Moiseiwitsch discusses his preferences among the splendid works of the art of which he is master, lesser mortals pause and listen.

"Will you tell me," he was asked, "because the piano-player would like to hear nothing so much, what are your preferences in the music you play and in the great library of piano literature you know so well? And if it take the amateur along paths which he has only inadequately explored, or which are even new to him, so much the better. Tell us of something good to play and to study—that which you like best—so that we may have a list of pieces of Mr. Moiseiwitsch's selection to consult and refresh ourselves by while you are away."

"The question is easier to answer," said Mr. Moiseiwitsch, "than some musical questions, because I could answer, in a word, my favourite composer is Schumann."

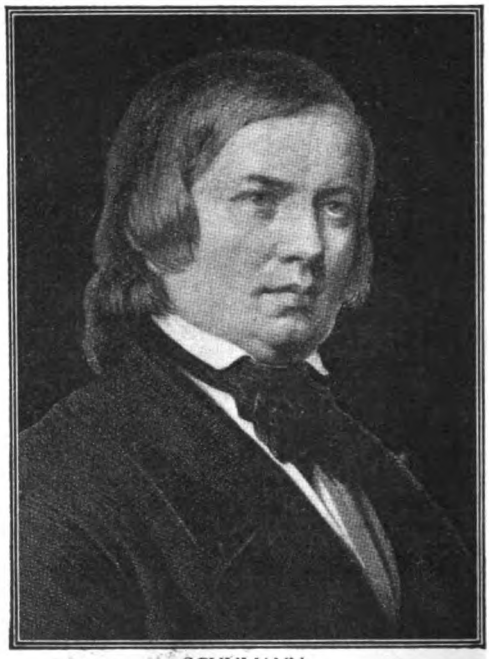
"In a word, why—when the fashion is all for Chopin or Beethoven or Liszt? Is Schumann so very attractive pianistically? One recalls the three Schumann recitals you gave at the Wigmore Hall—an astonishing devotion to a master, which the audience, for the time at any rate, seemed to share."



BENNO MOISEIWITSCH.
Photo. Claude Harris.

"The public needs no reconciling to Schumann," replied Mr. Moiseiwitsch. "In my first world-tour I did a thing undreamed of till then—gave exclusive recitals of Schumann in Australia—at Sydney and Melbourne—and they are as ready to acclaim him at the other side of the world as they are in the London West-end. But he is not my favourite com-

poser for pianistic reasons, but because, while other men are more or less bound by rules and traditions, he was a Romanticist—on the musical side a leader in a movement which was historic in the evolution of art forms—and I feel that his music, to say nothing of its interest, is always of an order the most noble, the most sincere, and the most refined. He wrote always as the mood dictated. His inspiration is sure, and he is courageously true to it. He is sometimes great in the biggest of his compositions, but equally you see his genius in the smallest of his works."



SCHUMANN.

"The word 'difficult' is a difficult word. Could one divide amateurs by thinking of those who would say the first movement of the Appassionata Sonata is not a difficult piece to play? Where does Schumann stand in point of difficulty? You have just played his Etudes Symphoniques. For the player who plays at home, they are outside his range?"

"There is no disguising the fact that the Etudes Symphoniques belong to what you would call difficult music, and, speaking generally, Schumann is more difficult pianistically than Beethoven. That must be conceded. He was not a born pianist, and he had certain limitations. He had so much to say that, when once begun, he did not think any more of the piano as an end, but only as a means. He put in orchestral effects, and thereby strained the limit of ability of human hands. But for largeness of form, richness of content, and clearness of idea, here was a master! And he wrote very much that anybody can play. Indeed, among the classics, hardly anybody makes a more popular address—is at once both so accessible and acceptable. Look at Kreisleriana and the Scenes of Childhood."

"Then Kreisleriana is not difficult?"

"As far as the fingers are concerned, no; musically, perhaps, yes. All depends on the intelligence and intellect of the person who plays. One presumes the first thing the amateur wants to hear is melody and harmony. Let him go to No. 2 and No. 4 and No. 5 and No. 8. They are easier, and they strike you at once. You need not study the music. You need not search to find beauties. They are there when you begin. No. 4 is only a couple of pages, and very slow, but to me is one of the most wonderful pieces of music written for the piano. It expresses the great depth and nobility of the composer and the utmost sincerity. If anybody has an ear for music he can hear it; if he has feeling he must feel it. It reveals Schumann as a character and an individual. He stands out, self-expressed, and you know and like the man. You meet many great works, but you cannot help coming upon holes because the writers have to adhere to certain forms and to fill up the gaps with intellect pure and simple, but you have to confess that they do not give you the same unalloyed delight as this little piece, and the reason of its strange good fortune is that it is just the natural outpouring of Schumann's very self. The others may be more technically difficult and more brilliantly written for the piano. No one will deny the beauty of Nos. 2, 4, and 6 of Kreisleriana, and, in contrast, the gaiety of Nos. 3, 5, and 8.

"Similarly, no one tires of Aufschwung, No. 2 of Opus 12, and Traumeswirren, No. 7 of Opus 12, the Phantasiestücke; and the early Papillons, Opus 2, are to be played. They are not difficult, and they are all precise and clear-cut. One of the curious things about Schumann's compositions is that amongst his notable works, to which one must give prominent mention, is a little collection of the easiest of all his compositions to play—the Kinderscenen—but they require a person with a great deal of psychology, as well as musical gifts, to do them justice. One needs imagination and sympathy to realize the poetic atmosphere. For instance, one of them is called 'Almost Too Serious' (Fast zu Ernst). Anybody

taking it up and trying it over will play the notes well enough, because the music is not difficult, but until you have given the impression of a peculiar phase of mind that the piece is meant to convey, it simply does not exist—you have not got anything like the right reading. To me it always suggests the idea of a little boy, rather plump and rosy-cheeked, doing something—amusing himself—and doing it very heavily, and pretending this is the most important thing in the world; and you must give that impression or you have not played the piece. There are scores of pieces like this in Schumann where you not only have to play the music, interpreting musically, but you must interpret intellectually and descriptively as well; you must get into the psychology—as, here, of the child which Schumann had in mind when he composed these things."

"The Forest Scenes are descriptive?"

"The Waldscenen is one of the most delightful collections of musical impressions I know, and they are all descriptive—to me poignantly descriptive—but they are descriptive in a particular way. Schumann did not set himself to describe a woodland feature, to which he had already given a name, and then evolve musical notions about it. He let his moods in the forest find an utterance, unforced and spontaneous, and gave a name to them afterwards, as the title suggested itself. And that is the way in which music should be studied. Nobody should know what a composition is called. It should be allowed to speak for itself and find its own name. The Prophet Bird (Vogel als Prophet, Op. 82, No. 7) would still be the Prophet Bird had it not been labelled, and the artiste must find out for himself what it says. Without a word, there would still be in it the sense, the shadow, the foretelling of his own tragic fate, of which Schumann, when he wrote it, was conscious. There would still be beauty, with the knowledge of the end of all things.

CHOPIN.

Pianistically the piece is much easier than many, but it is a composition which ranks very high. Any player, if he is a musician at all, must do something with it."

"Of Schumann's greatest works——"

"His Concerto certainly ranks with the first three. Many people prefer it to the other two, Beethoven's E flat and Brahms's B flat major. For the most complete work for piano and orchestra—the most satisfying in organic development and structure—the palm assuredly goes to Schumann. He had a power of symphonic management of which Chopin knew next to nothing, was used to the larger canvas, and could work out his motives with the sure hand of a master and with strictness. He was an essentially broad man. Two of his sonatas have their place with the best, the G minor and the F sharp minor, and everybody should have seen the sonatas Opus 11, 14, and 22. There is very good work in the Davidsbündler, a collection of sixteen or eighteen pieces, and, of course, in the Carneval, which everybody has. As I say, I do not know anything in piano music that is at once so big, noble, refined, and sincere. Everyone, if he plays no more, should play the last movement of the C major Fantasie (Op. 17). The Fantasie consists of three movements. The second is a big movement, full of temperament and technically very brilliant — exceptionally brilliant writing — but the last movement is very quiet, and there is hardly a climax as far as sonority is concerned. I am so annoyed that many musicians, when they criticize this Fantasie, say the movements are misplaced, and call the last movement an anti-climax to the second, a view which audiences as a rule share by applauding the second movement much more than they do the Finale. I am of opinion that it is not an anti-climax, because Schumann's brilliancy is merely incidental, and the real Schumann is in the last movement of the

Schumann and Chopin

Fantasie, and, where it is, for me it makes a perfect piece. But it does not stir the audience externally, and if you want to play to the gallery you must reverse the movements, but the musician should realize that as Schumann has put them they are in the right order. The third movement anybody can play, and will like. Wherever the player is who has not tried it, he need have no hesitation about getting the Fantasie. I would add one word to the player who is exploring Schumann, and it is this: Find the most beautiful passages and try to plumb the depths of them. Then leave it and go to something else. Whenever you come to Schumann come fresh to him. That is the only means of finding the real composer and the significance of his work. Apply yourself to him only when your mind is clear and receptive."

"And what about poor Mr. Chopin? Are we never to wrestle with the Barcarolle again?"

"Oh, the Barcarolle is not so difficult," said Mr. Moiseiwitsch, reassuringly. "There are a few chords you must hit exactly in the climax, but there are no difficulties one cannot overcome with application. The Barcarolle is chiefly difficult because it is programme music. You must give a certain impression—the suggestion of the barcarolle effect—and yet not spoil the continuity of the melodic outline."

"And we must still make Chopin's Studies and Preludes our daily food?"

"A good knowledge of the Studies and certainly of the Preludes is essential for the player, but I would not feed the amateur on Chopin, just as I would not have any student read Dickens through, from first book to last, without relief. To me a Chopin craze is like a Dickens craze, and both lead to artificiality. You make friends with the odd Dickens characters, and you go round the gallery, and once you get hold of the Chopin melody and manner you love it and it sticks to you and you think it the most beautiful thing on earth, but when you begin to reflect and to analyse it is as plain as noonday that Dickens and Chopin were both exaggerators! I do not deny that Dickens's characters are beautiful and you become attached to them, but common honesty makes you admit that there is something unreal about them as well. And that is a parable for Chopin worshippers. You know, you can have too much of Chopin, but you cannot have too much of Schumann. I do not know which generation will prove it, this or three generations hence, but I think Schumann will outlast Chopin. So far it is not proved yet, but for me Schumann has much more of reality (and that is what one wants), much more of sincerity, and a much wider scope than Chopin. If you try to get to the bottom of the two characters that provided this music you cannot help thinking Chopin was a small person while Schumann was big and broad in every sense, and, indeed, noble. That is the man. But there is something selfish about Chopin's music. It is the outpourings of his own, often melancholy, state of mind, and rather on a small scale. He is very much self-centred. Schumann is a much broader man, in shoulder and in character!"

By SIR LANDON RONALD.

Photo. Bassano.

I CORDIALLY agree with Mr. Moiseiwitsch's praise for Schumann's music. I yield to none in my deep admiration of his pianoforte music, his songs, and the immortal Quintet. I have loved these things all my life, having been brought up in the "Schumann School." I remember Clara Schumann (his wife) vividly, and although her rendition of her husband's beautiful works never satisfied me, she always made me feel that she passed her life trying to make the public appreciate his genius. And there is no gainsaying the fact that she succeeded.

Schumann's great weakness was his orchestral writing. Take his Symphonies, his Overtures, his wonderful Pianoforte Concerto—all beautiful music—spoilt a great deal by bad scoring. And the pity of it, because certainly there is nothing more perfect and beautiful in the whole of the literature for the pianoforte than the Concerto in A minor.

It is good to read in these days such forcible views as those expressed by an artiste of Mr. Moiseiwitsch's calibre. We are living in times when I fear that beauty in music is mostly sacrificed for sensationalism or unadulterated ugliness. Your modern highbrow is inclined to look down upon the Romantic School of which Schumann was such a leading light. But as long as a love of the beautiful lasts in this world, so assuredly will Schumann's music endure. He has his niche in the Temple of Fame, and posterity will see that his works never die.

By MARK HAMBOURG.

Photo. Swaine.

IT seems to me impossible to compare two great stars of musical literature of such magnitude as Schumann and Chopin to the detriment of either. Thank God for both, I say! Also, I cannot understand how any pianist can fail to feel under the *deepest* obligation to Chopin, who did more than anyone to revolutionize and develop our means of expression and *technic* on our most difficult instrument, and who, after all, gave the world the most perfect examples of all emotions that can be expressed in music on the piano. There is no greater admirer of Schumann than myself, and every time I play his great Fantasie in C major I feel how lucky I am to be a pianist and possess this monumental work, as also his many other masterpieces. But I feel no less joy when playing the B minor Chopin Sonata. All his smaller works, preludes, studies, waltzes, mazurkas, etc., are exquisite little poems, which will surely remain a never-ending source of pleasure to musicians as long as the piano lasts.

By IRENE SCHARRER.

WITH Mr. Moiseiwitsch's views on Schumann I very largely agree; I often think he is my favourite composer—not always! I should hesitate to say that he is "so very attractive pianistically." In respect of actual knowledge of the keyboard and pianistic effect, Chopin was undoubtedly the greater master; but for sheer nobility, sincerity, and depth of imagination Schumann stands alone. I do not agree that "he wrote very much that anybody can play." The smallest and apparently simplest of his compositions were the natural and spontaneous expressions of an inspired genius, and, in my opinion, almost unplayable by the amateur who can occasionally make some of the easier works of Chopin, Beethoven—and even Bach—presentable.

Photo. Claude Harris.

I disagree again with Mr. Moiseiwitsch when he writes of Schumann's organic development and structure, etc., saying, "He had a power of symphonic management of which Chopin knew next to nothing, was used to the larger canvas, and could work out his motives with the sure hand of a master." Many of those who love Schumann most agree that it is almost impossible to make any big, continuous work of his (with the exception of his G minor Sonata) really hang together. Even the C major Fantasie (first movement), the loveliest and most inspired work ever written, is a series of beautiful, very beautiful, episodes. The last movement—which Mr. Moiseiwitsch says "anybody can play," I personally consider far the most difficult. It is, perhaps the most perfect thing he ever wrote. I disagree almost entirely with all that he says of Chopin; but then I have not been asked to give my views upon the works of this great master.

Certain it is that his Fantasie, Barcarolle, F minor Ballade, B flat minor and B minor Sonatas are masterpieces as regards sheer beauty *and architecture*, and it is precisely this architectural quality which I find lacking in Schumann's big continuous works. For the rest of his chief compositions, Papillons, Carnaval, Kinderscenen, Kreisleriana, Waldscenen, Etudes Symphoniques, etc., each is a series of short, very perfect pieces.

Mr. Moiseiwitsch affirms that the greatest pianoforte concertos are Schumann's, Beethoven's in E flat, and Brahms's in B flat. Has he forgotten the greatest of them all—the G major of Beethoven?

By SIR FREDERIC H. COWEN.

YOU ask me for a few remarks as to the respective merits of Schumann and Chopin.

I think there can be no doubt that Schumann is much the greater composer of the two.

Not only is the scope of his genius much wider, but his ideas and their development are on a much higher plane than those of the other composer.

It is true that in his choral and orchestral music he cannot be fitly compared to the

greatest masters in these branches of the art—though his Symphonies, in spite of their somewhat poor orchestration, are worthy of being performed oftener than they are—but his lovely songs, his innumerable and beautiful piano works, and his string quartets, trios, etc., are quite sufficient to secure him a very high and enduring place among the immortals.

Photo, Russell.

Chopin's genius, on the contrary, was of a much more limited character, being confined, as it was, almost exclusively to the piano; but, while making due allowance for this fact, one cannot but acknowledge and admire the poetry and delicacy—I might almost say the sensitiveness—of his music; his strongly-marked individuality—born, perhaps, of his nationality—and the unique charm and grace of his melodies and pianoforte passages. All these characteristics, combined with his musicianship, certainly entitle him, within his limitations, to rank, if not among the really great composers, at least among the most lovable; and I do not wonder at the peculiar fascination (greater, I fancy, in most cases than that of Schumann) that his music holds for all pianists and for the public—a fascination that I venture to think is likely to last as long as there are pianos and pianists to play on them.

By ERNEST NEWMAN.

THE difficulty in discussions of this kind is to avoid being seduced into taking sides—or seeming to do so. Why should we? If someone says he prefers Dickens to Thackeray, or *vice versâ*, our first impulse is to say we prefer the other fellow, merely because we feel he isn't being treated fairly, and we are inclined to exaggerate his merits because his demerits have been too strongly insisted on. So with Tennyson and Browning, Handel and Bach, Mozart and Haydn, Meredith and Hardy, Lloyd George and Asquith, Claridge's and the Ritz, and all the other standard antitheses. Why can't we be allowed to enjoy both?

Mr. Moiseiwitsch, I am sure, enjoys Schumann and Chopin equally; but he has felt, for the moment, that he must exalt the horn of Schumann with honour, and this apparently means depressing that of Chopin. I really can't see why; and I am pretty sure that Mr. Moiseiwitsch, if he were so minded, could make out an equally good case for putting Chopin above Schumann. It merely means counting all the hits on one side and both hits and misses on the other; there is no doubt as to the winner when the marker begins scoring on this principle.

Photo, Haine.

Such a principle inevitably makes any spectator with a sense of justice start totting up the misses of the winner also. If I were to do this in the present case, I would draw attention to a weakness of Schumann from which Chopin is comparatively free. Neither of them is a great builder, in the sense that Beethoven or Brahms is; but Schumann is the less expert builder of the two. I love Schumann, I think, as much as Mr. Moiseiwitsch does; but I confess that he irritates me somewhat when I hear him in the mass. He repeats himself too often; instead of developing the subject of his discourse, he is content to repeat it again and again. He is a wonderful miniaturist: but you cannot make a big picture by pasting together a number of miniatures. Mr. Moiseiwitsch rightly insists on the power and beauty of the Symphonic Studies; but does not he feel, as I do, that in the finale, where the greatest display of power should be made, Schumann spoils everything by repeating instead of developing?

Chopin, too, is a miniaturist, but he does not make the mistake of stringing his miniatures together and trying to persuade us that in this way we are getting a big work. Nor, within the miniature itself, does he repeat himself in the rather shameless, helpless way that Schumann often does.

I cannot agree with Mr. Moiseiwitsch that Chopin's music is more selfish than Schumann's. All the Romanticists were selfish: each of them was tremendously interested in himself, and especially his sufferings. It is merely, I think, that Schumann's musical egoism appeals more to Mr. Moiseiwitsch than Chopin's. I know people who feel just the opposite about it—who prefer Chopin petulantly cursing the world (as in the "Revolutionary" Study) to Schumann sentimentalizing over it (as they put it). Everyone to his taste!

Link Law

by

LYNN DOYLE

ILLUSTRATED BY ALFRED LEETE

UP till the time the Golf Club was started in Ballygullion there was nothin' for the better class of people to do but drink whisky an' play tuppeny nap. Very severe the same two occupations was on them, too. We used to use up a dispensary doctor in about ten years; a bank manager seldom lasted above five, an' a cashier about eighteen months; an' as for district inspectors of the polis, they melted like snow off a ditch. The thing begun to be a bit of a scandal in the end, an' at last a few of the leadin' men put their heads together an' determined that some other way of killin' spare time ought to be provided. After a lot of cogitation they hit on the notion of a golf club; an' a committee was formed, includin' wee Mr. Anthony, the solicitor, a very cocky little fellow in his way, who thought he knowed all about everything.

First of all they took a likely piece of ground in Mr. Hastings's demesne. The next thing to be done was to get some knowledgeable man that would show them how to lay it out; an' the general opinion of the committee was that they should get down one of them fellows that plays golf for their livin'.

So hearin' there was a great swell of a professional player, a Scotchman, comin' over to Belfast about another club, they wrote an' trysted him to come to Ballygullion as well.

So the Scotchman came along, a wee, wiry-lookin', hard-faced fellow, an' could lower a power of whisky without makin' any fuss about it after it was down. He put them all in great heart about the new course, an' told them they'd the makin' of the finest eighteen-hole course in the three kingdoms; but I misdoubt somebody must have fetched over a splinter of the Blarney Stone to Scotland a while before he left home; for the night he quitted Ballygullion him an' me had a couple of drinks together, an' he told me it would never be a course till the Day of Judgment.

I went into Ballygullion the next day to see Mr. Anthony, but when I got to his office about four o'clock, who should I meet comin' out but himself, an' the wee office-boy comin' behind him with not less nor half-a-hundredweight of clubs in a bag on his back.

"The very man I want," sez Mr. Anthony. "Here," sez he to the wee boy, "away back an' copy them letters. Do you take the clubs off him, Pat, an' come on down to the links with me."

"I thought ye weren't goin' to play golf, Mr. Anthony," sez I, gapin' at him.

"Neither I am," sez he, a bit short. "But Fitzsimons down the street has started, an' he's been in with me bummin' an' blastin' about what he can do; an' I'm just goin' over to the links to let him know what he can't do; an' then I'll stop. They have a kind of a makeshift hole fixed up, from the bottom of the Whinny Hill to the top, an' Fitzsimons says he did it in fifteen. He's a liar, Pat," sez Mr. Anthony; "an' even if he isn't I can do it in less. Fifteen!" sez he, "an' it no longer than eighty yards. I shot a rabbit on the top of the same hill only last year an' me standin' further back than where they play from. If I can't get into the same hole in five shots I'll give in that Fitzsimons can draft a conveyance better than I can; an' I needn't say more than that. Away you up to the top of the hill, now. You'll see a jam-pot sunk in the ground beyond the whins; that's the hole. I'll shout before I let fly, an' do you keep a keen eye out for the ball."

"Watch ye don't hit me, Mr. Anthony," sez I.

"What odds if I do?" sez he; "sure the ball's indiarubber. It'll bounce off you. Hold on a minit"—pullin' a wee book out of his pocket. "I can't find it," sez he, puttin' the book back in his pocket again, "but I believe I'd lose strokes if I hit you. Better stand well away from the hole."

So I went away to the top of the hill, an' stood with a foot on each side of the hole, thinkin' that would be the safest place; an' presently Mr. Anthony gives a shout. I seen him square himself an' wave the stick about in the air awhile, an' then he took a terrible wind at the ball.

"I don't know where it's gone, Mr. Anthony," I calls down to him. "I neither heard nor seen it."

"I wasn't tryin' to hit it that time," he shouts. "I was just loosenin' myself a bit. Look out now!"

"I didn't see hint or hare of it, Mr. Anthony," I calls. "Did it come this way?"

"I missed it that time, too," he shouts back, very wicked. "Do you think it's a football I'm aimin' at?"

By this time I could see it was goin' to be a longer job than I'd expected, so I lay down an' lit my pipe. The next six wipes Mr. Anthony took at the ball he hit nothin' but wind, an' with every welt he made the eyeglass fell out of his eye. Then he laid the stick down on the ground an' walked about a bit, talkin' to himself, an' I don't think his language was very improvin'. He up with the stick again, an' this time he hit somethin' anyway, for a sod of turf rose up in the air as big as a saddle-cloth; an' with that he turned round towards the wee wood behind him an' threw the stick as far as he could in among the trees. I thought by this he was done for the day, an' riz up to go back to him; when I seen him pluckin' another club out of the bag an' takin' a run-race at the ball, an' the next minit it come singin' over my head, an' pitched on the ground not twenty yards from the hole. When I looked back Mr. Anthony was gatherin' up his bag. I seen my chance in a flash, run out of the bushes, bent double, an' picked up the ball an' popped it in the jam-pot.

"Mr. Anthony," I called down the hill, "Mr. Anthony, you've put it into the hole!"

He stopped dead, an' fixed the eyeglass in tighter.

"What's that?" he shouts. "Did you say *into* the hole?"

"Right in," sez I. "Come an' see for yourself."

He dropped the bag like a hot potato, gave a yell an' a couple of steps of a Highland fling, an' then up the face of the hill as hard as he could tear.

"Show me," sez he.

"There it is," sez I. "Look."

I was waitin' to hear him let another yell; but you never knew Mr. Anthony.

"Not a bad shot, Pat," sez he, quite cool, "eh? An' me only a beginner, too. Wait till I'm at it a while! I knew I could do it," sez he; "I knew I could teach that big-headed fellow Fitzsimons a thing or two. It's the theory did it, Pat. That's where I have the pull over the rest of them; I've read the books. I got that shot out of a book by a man called Vardon—they say you have to buy a bottle of whisky when you get a hole in one. Come on back to Ballygullion till I get a bottle an' fetch it down an' give Fitzsimons a glass. He'll choke on it, he'll be that gunked. A hole in one shot, Pat," sez he, gettin' excited again. "It'll be a record on this course till all eternity."

"What about the times you missed the ball altogether, Mr. Anthony?" sez I.

"Eh?" sez he, very sharp. He stopped his jigs all at once, an' stood lookin' at me. "That's all right, Pat," sez he, after a minit. "The game doesn't start till you hit the ball. Come on down the hill; I'll get my clubs, an' then we'll be off an' catch Fitzsimons before he leaves his office." He pushed through the whins lookin' as if he was thinkin' very hard. "Pat," sez he, presently, "I wouldn't say anything to Fitzsimons about the times I missed the ball. He's an ignorant fellow, an' might try to make little of me. I'll go down to his office by myself. I wouldn't like to crow over him before anybody. But I tell you what I'll do. The Golf Club'll be open in a month's time. I'll go into trainin' from now till then, an' I'll challenge Fitzsimons to play me for ten pounds. If I do, will you come an' carry my bag?"

"Come!" sez I. "I'll come if I have to leave the praties rottin' in the drill."

"Very well," sez he, "I'll send you word."

RIGHT enough, I got a letter from him in about five weeks' time sayin' the match was on for the followin' day.

As I was goin' up the street next day to keep my appointment I met the wee office-boy, an' he told me I was to turn back an' wait for Mr. Anthony at the end of the town. Presently he comes along, an' a most lamentable swell he was, in a shootin'-jacket an' knickerbockers, an' a pair of fancy stockin's with tops on them as bright as the head-lights of a motor-car.

"I had to meet you here, Pat," sez he. "Old Mrs. McIlheron of Pennyquirk sent word she was comin' to the office to make her will, an' I wouldn't ha' got clear of her before dark. Confound her, anyway," sez he. "I wish she'd go mad all out instead of stoppin' half-way, an' then we could put her in the asylum an' have done with her."

Ye must know that this Mrs. McIlheron was an old widow-woman wi' no children, that had left Belfast an' bought a place near Ballygullion when her husband died.

She had got very odd living by herself, an' spent near her whole time knittin' stockin's for the heathen an' makin' whatever kind of wills she thought would give most annoyance when she was dead. One time she'd go to Fitzsimons, an' the next time she'd go to Mr. Anthony; an' troth the pair of them must ha' made near as much out of her as kept them in pocket-money.

"I wonder you'd run the risk of missin' her, Mr. Anthony," sez I. "She might ha' left you a legacy. Maybe she's away to Fitzsimons now."

"Let her go," sez Mr. Anthony, "the thrawn old divil. When I make her will she leaves a legacy to Fitzsimons, an' when he makes her will she leaves a legacy to me. She says it's for fear the will would be disputed. To pot with her. I'll make more out of Fitzsimons this evenin' than I would out of her."

"Mr. Anthony," I called down the hill, "you've put it into the hole!"

"You think you'll beat him, then?" sez I.

"Beat him!" sez Mr. Anthony. "I could beat Vardon. An' mind you, Pat, I wouldn't ha' said that this time yesterday. It's a most cursed game. You'll be drivin' like a professional on Tuesday, an' if you part your hair differently on Wednesday divil a ball you can hit. But I've bottomed it at last. I don't suppose there's another man in Ireland has mastered it but myself. Do you hear me, Pat? I wouldn't take nine pounds nineteen an' ninepence for my chance of that ten-pound note. Hurry up, till I get started to him."

When we got to the course we could see Fitzsimons standin' waitin' for us with one of his clerks holdin' his bag of clubs.

"Blast him," sez Mr. Anthony; "he's a long-headed fellow, too. Now he has two legal opinions to one, an' that blackguard of his would swear a hole in a door. Here, do you take this"—he handed me a wee book—"an' if there's a difference between Fitzsimons an' me, do you look into that as wise as you can, an' whatever I say you swear to."

"I'll do my best, Mr. Anthony," sez I; "but remember that I'm not a lawyer, an' still have a soul to be saved."

"Here we are, Fitzsimons," sez Mr. Anthony. "Blaze away."

Fitzsimons is a long, dry, cautious fellow, an' I could see he wasn't goin' to be rushed.

"After you, Anthony," sez he. "You're the senior solicitor in the town."

"So I am," sez Mr. Anthony, all pleased. "So I am. I'd better drive, then. Wait a minit till I get out my note-book. I want to mark down my score."

He turned his back on Fitzsimons, took a hasty skelly at the note-book, an' put it back in his pocket. Then he pulls a club out of his bag, an' perches his ball up on a wee hill of sand. Whatever he read in the book I could see his lips goin' as he muttered it over to himself. He laid the head of his club down behind the ball, kept it there till I near bursted the buttons off my waistcoat with holdin' my breath, then drew back like lightnin' an' fetched a most wicked dunch at the ball. He just all but missed it clean-work. It flew off at right angles an' took Jones, the articled clerk, in the waistcoat. Jones doubled in two with a gulp, the clubs flew out of his hand, an' he sat down sudden on the grass an' started rubbin' himself.

Fitzsimons run over to see was his man killed, but divil a hare Mr. Anthony cared whether the ball had went out through him.

"That's my hole, Fitzsimons," sez he. "That's my hole. I aimed for him, Pat," sez he, in a half-whisper. "He was standin' too far in front, an' I seen my chance. Fetch out the wee blue book an' look up Rule eighteen. One up to me," sez he as Fitzsimons pulled up the clerk to his legs; "I get that hole."

"You should get fourteen days for assault an' battery," sez Fitzsimons, very savage. "How do you make it your hole?"

"Your caddie interfered with my ball," sez Mr. Anthony. "Read him Rule eighteen, Pat—wait, I'll read it: 'If a player's ball when in motion be interfered with in any way by an opponent or his caddie——' I

think you'll admit that my ball was in motion——"

I took a look at Jones, an' by the colour of his face he didn't look like disputin' it, anyway.

"An' Jones is your caddie," goes on Mr. Anthony.

"He is not," snaps Fitzsimons. "He's my clerk. A caddie is a boy employed by the club——"

"Blethers," sez Mr. Anthony, breakin' in. "Of course he's your caddie. Isn't he carryin' your clubs?"

"It doesn't matter," sez Fitzsimons, settin' his lips very obstinate. "The club doesn't pay him. Now, you can't get over that, Anthony."

"I can get over it, an' I will get over it," sez Mr. Anthony. "Are you content to state a case to the Golfin' Union?"

"I am," sez Fitzsimons, "an' I'll draw up a memorandum when I get back to the office. Are you better, Jones? All right; reach me my driver."

So Fitzsimons made another wee hill of sand, an' perched up his ball, an' took a shot at it. As I said, he was a cautious old boy, Fitzsimons; an' he didn't go back near as far as Mr. Anthony, an' not half as fast. But for all that he missed the ball teetotally altogether.

"One!" sez Mr. Anthony.

"What's one?" snaps Fitzsimons at him. "The game doesn't start till you hit the ball. Didn't you tell me that in my own office the day you said you got the practice hole in one, an' repeated it over an' over again till I was scunnered listenin' to you?"

"That's right, Mr. Anthony," sez I. "I mind you tellin' me——"

But Mr. Anthony gave me a look that near burned a hole in me.

"I may have thought that at the time, Fitzsimons," sez he, "but on reading the rules I found out my mistake."

"Ay, but read this one," sez Fitzsimons, luggin' out a wee book of his own. "Rule two: 'A match begins by each side playing a ball from the first teeing-ground.' I haven't played my ball off the teeing-ground. There it's sittin'. This match isn't started yet."

"Show me," sez Mr. Anthony. He read the rule over very carefully, pluckin' at his lower lip.

"Well, what do you make of it?" sez Fitzsimons, crowin'.

"For the love of goodness, Mr. Anthony, give in to him," sez I. "We're here a quarter of an hour as it is, an' if we go on at this rate we'll not be finished till about Tuesday week."

"You can go on, without prejudice," sez Mr. Anthony. "I'll look up the authorities afterwards. But seein' that the match isn't started I'll have another shot, too."

So Fitzsimons takes a gingerly sort of whack at his ball, an' knocked it about fifty yards along the course. You could see Mr. Anthony's lip curlin' at all the length it travelled.

"I can better that, Fitz," sez he. He screwed the eyeglass tight into his eye, set his teeth, an' knocked the ball a good hundred an' fifty yards as straight as an arrow.

"Didn't I tell you I had mastered this game, Pat?" sez he. "It's hardly decent to take the money off him. I should ha' laid him two to one."

"Take your time, Mr. Anthony," sez I. "You have a lot of lepps to clear yet."

An' sure enough the next wallop he took he sunk the ball out of sight in a grassy bank in front of him. The ground was purty soft, an' I don't believe any man livin' could ha' found it, short of puttin' in a ferret. So Mr. Anthony lost the hole; an' he was that mad about the simple way it had happened that he took five skites at the next teein'-ground, as they call it, before he hit the ball at all, an' lost that hole too. I thought he was clean beat altogether; for Fitzsimons kept askin' him every five or six yards if that was two up, till Mr. Anthony was near purple in the face wi' rage. However, the anger stood well to him, for he hit the ball such a punch that it took Fitzsimons three goes to get up to him, an' Mr. Anthony won that hole four shots to the good.

THE next three holes was among the whinny ground, an' they both lost their balls at the whole three, an' had to call quits. Then they come to the hole that Mr. Anthony had done in one, an' tryin' to do it over again he knocked the ball into a whin-bush behind him, an' took twenty-three. That left him two holes to the bad; but he wasn't a bit daunted, an' won the next hole in a canter, through Fitzsimons losin' count.

He was well on to winnin' the next hole as well, till, happenin' to hit a high one, his ball stuck in the fork of a tree, where nothin' but an earthquake would ha' shook it out; but Fitzsimons stood on his own ball as he was lookin' up at the tree, an' Mr. Anthony swore if he didn't call it a draw he'd go home for a saw an' cut the tree down; so they called that hole quits too, leavin' Fitzsimons still one up.

He didn't hold the lead very long.

At the next hole he was switherin' what club he should take, an' turned an' asked

Jones. Jones, by the look on his face, didn't care what club he took, but advised again a wooden one.

"That'll do," sez Mr. Anthony, pullin' out his wee blue book. "My hole. Rule four: 'A player accepting advice from anyone but his caddie loses the hole.'"

"Jones *is* my caddie," snaps Fitzsimons.

"He wasn't at the first hole," sez Mr. Anthony. "You can't have it both ways."

The ball flew off at right angles an' took Jones, the articled clerk, in the waistcoat.

"We stated a case at the first hole," sez Fitzsimons. "It's not decided yet."

"I'll make you a present of the case," sez Mr. Anthony. "If you win it you lose this one."

"All I have to say, gentlemen," sez I, "is if you're goin' to make this a lawsuit instead of a golfin' match, ye'd better put it off till the Assizes, and engage a special jury."

"Murphy's right," growls Fitzsimons. "You can have the hole to save time."

"I settled him there, Pat," sez Mr. Anthony to me. "What? He's beat now. I've established my legal superiority. I'm better than he is, even with my hands, but it's the head that counts. This is a game you play with your head. I've been forgettin' that. I'll out-general him now—damme, I'll out-general him. How many holes are there to go?"

"Six," sez I, reckonin' up.

"Very well," sez Mr. Anthony. "I'll beat him six up. Wait; we'll allow one for accidents; say five up. Gimme that driver."

However, whether Mr. Anthony's brains wasn't workin' at their best, or whether it was his hands was at fault, or whether the two weren't comin' in at the same time, when they got to the last hole but one nobody was anythin' to the good.

Mr. Anthony should ha' won the hole hands down.

Fitzsimons had been doin' great work in the bad ground with a weapon he called a niblick, a short-handled club with a face on it the size of a full moon; but working along the edge of the county road he hit a "Trespassers Prosecuted" notice crossways with it, an' the head of the club took near five minutes to come down. All Mr. Anthony had to do then was to keep cool; but takin' a lamentable wallop just to make sure of the hole, the club flew out of his hands into the Scroggy Wood an' was never seen again, an' that made him as mad as Fitzsimons was. Jones an' I told them they were quits when they both got into the hole, but, troth, it would ha' took an accountant to come to the rights of the matter.

"Never mind," sez Mr. Anthony to me, full of heart; "you can't help your hands gettin' slippy. If I'd bought tuppenceworth of cobbler's wax in Ballygullion I'd 'a had him beat half an hour ago. Watch me now, Pat, when I'm up agin it."

Fitzsimons was shaking like a leaf when he stood up to play, but the ball must ha' got in the way of a bad trimmle of his hands, for it went off well down the course. As Mr. Anthony reached for his club, who should come out from among the trees but

old Mrs. McIlheron, an' makes towards the teein'-ground.

"Gimme that club quick, Pat," sez he. "If she gets a hold of me before I drive, the hole is lost."

"Stop, Mr. Anthony, stop!" sez I. "You'll kill the woman."

"I don't give a damn," sez he. "Sure her will's made."

I suppose the hurry put the nervousness out of him; anyway, he hit that ball near two hundred yards, an' well over her head.

"Come on," sez he. "The old divil can wait till I've the hole won."

An' as we went along hot-foot out strolls one of Mr. Hastings's bullocks from the bushes, picks up Mr. Anthony's ball in its mouth, an' starts to chew it as unconcerned as if it was a carrot.

With that Mr. Anthony let one yell and up the course like a madman, whirlin' the club round his head and cursin' like a tinker. The old lady seen him comin' an' just give a squawk an' sat down in one solid lump. Mr. Anthony went past her like an express train at a country station, makin' at the bullock. But the bullock was as cool as a china egg, an' just stood there chewin' away, with the strings of gutta-percha hangin' out of his mouth. When Mr. Anthony got within ten yards of him he began to see there was no great friendship intended to him, an' he slipped by Mr. Anthony at a trot, headin', as luck would have it, right for Mrs. McIlheron. All the yells Mr. Anthony had let out of him was nothin' to the screechin' of the poor old lady then. The three of us started the runnin'; but Mr. Anthony came in first an' headed the bullock off just in time.

It took us fifteen minutes by the clock to persuade her she wasn't dead, an' another fifteen to get her to the Hastingses' gate lodge. I thought the golfin'-match was ended by all this; but I might ha' knowed Mr. Anthony better. Back he would go to finish it out, an' Fitzsimons, hopin' the bullock was chewin' his cud on the pulp of the ball by this time, was just as keen. So we tucked Mrs. McIlheron up at the fire, sent the lodge-keeper's wee son into Ballygullion for the doctor, an' back to the course again.

MR. ANTHONY wouldn't give in that the bullock could ha' swallowed the ball at the rate he'd been runnin', an' sure enough he was right, for we found it on the edge of the long grass—what was left of it. The whole cover was full of dinges an' cuts, an' the inside was hangin' round it in strings like the whiskers of a mountainy farmer.

"The match is mine," says Fitzsimons, rubbin' his hands. "You can't play that thing."

"Can I not?" sez Mr. Anthony, scringein' his teeth. "I could play it if it was in jelly. Gimme that iron."

He hit at the ball most vicious, an' knocked it out on the cut grass, an' then started flailin' it along next the hole, the rest of us followin' without a word, for I believe he'd ha' killed any man that spoke above his breath. Every welt took the ball along about twenty yards; for of course it wouldn't carry in the air, an' wherever it lit it stopped. But there was one advantage in that, too, for Mr. Anthony kept the course for the first time that day—till he got within thirty yards of the hole, an' then, hittin' extra hard, he went out to the right. The ball struck a long trailer of a brier an' hung there by the whiskers, about three feet off the ground.

"That ends him," sez I to myself, an' troth I was sorry; for he was showin' a great heart.

But not a bit of it. He aimed a bitter blow at the brier. Up went the ball in the air, an' lit on the green not six inches from the hole.

"Did you see that, Pat?" sez Mr. Anthony. "Did you see the generalship of them last two shots, one to get the ball up off the ground, an' the next one beside the hole? I could never have rolled it up as accurate as that. You must pitch the ball up to the hole. Vardon says that. I'll be down in one more, an' I'm only twenty-two so far. Where are you, Fitzsimons?"

One of us looked at the other.

"God bless my soul," sez Fitzsimons. "I forgot all about my ball!"

An' so he had, an' so had all of us, watchin' the antics of Mr. Anthony.

"Come on back an' we'll watch you playin' up," sez Mr. Anthony. "Walk alongside of him, Pat," he whispers, "an' just smile every time he misses a shot. His nerve will be gone with the recovery I've made when he thought he had me beat. It'll be like fallin' out of a balloon to him. He has only twenty-one to win, and it'll take him fifty. Begad," he sez, "shootin's nothin' to this game; an' look at the money you make!"

There's no doubt Mr. Anthony has a head on him, though some of his capers would make you think he hadn't. The divil a ball could Fitzsimons hit. He hit them into the ground, an' he dug holes behind them you could plant a bush in, and he welted them up trees an' into rushes, but anywhere except along the course. Mr. Anthony opened his mouth two or three times to encourage him, an' I'll do him the justice to say that he closed it again; but the smile on his face was deservin' of

sudden death. At last Fitzsimons hit a lucky one an' landed on the green.

"How many is that?" sez Mr. Anthony.

"Twenty-nine," sez Fitzsimons; an' he wasn't more than ten short of the count.

"You needn't hole out," sez Mr. Anthony. "I'm down in twenty-three."

"I will hole out," sez Fitzsimons, very short.

So he steadied himself, an' was down in five more shots.

"That's thirty-four," sez Mr. Anthony. "An' this is twenty-three, as I said," sez he, knockin' his ball into the hole. "Hand over ten pounds, Fitzsimons. You never had a chance. I'll give you five up the next time."

"Bless my soul, Mr. Anthony," sez I, dumbfounded, "he's correct there."

For wee worms of rubber were stickin' out all round the hole.

Mr. Anthony headed the bullock off just in time, and it took us fifteen minutes by the clock to persuade the old lady that she wasn't dead.

"That's all right," sez Mr. Anthony, not a bit put about. "I have ten strokes to spare."

An' he starts to scrape in the bits of rubber.

"My hole," sez Fitzsimons, with as near a chuckle as I ever heard him give, "an' my match. Rule five: 'The ball must not be pushed, scraped, nor spooned.'"

"Wait a minit," sez Fitzsimons. "Your ball's not in the hole yet."

We all gaped at him.

"Are ye blind?" sez Mr. Anthony. "Don't you see it's in the hole?"

"It's not all in the hole," sez Fitzsimons. "The half of the stuffin' isn't in yet."

"I wasn't scrapin' the ball," sez Mr. Anthony. "The ball's in the hole."

But I could hear by the sound of his voice his heart wasn't in the words.

"You were scrapin' part of the ball," sez Fitzsimons, "an' you know it, too. I'll trouble you for ten pounds."

"Wait till I read that rule again," sez Mr. Anthony. He took out his own wee book, an' looked at it a long time, flutterin' the leaves an' readin' here an' there. Then the eyeglass fell from his eye, an' he reached for his pocket. Ye'd ha' felt sorry to look at him.

But Fitzsimons wasn't a bit sorry, nor Jones either. Fitzsimons smiled over at Jones, an' Jones gave his waistcoat a rub an' smiled back at him, as much as to say: "He's paid out now."

It was too much for Mr. Anthony. He pulled his hand out of his pocket again.

"I won't pay a penny," sez he, "till I get a decision on this; not if that long ruler of a fellow of yours should rub the buttons of his waistcoat into the rings of his spine. I'll state a case, Fitzsimons, I'll state a case to the Golfin' Union; an' when it's decided you'll pay me, you'll see that. Come on, Pat." An' away he tears towards the county road.

"I doubt them fellows'll give it agin you, Mr. Anthony," sez I, as we went along.

"Let them," sez he, between his teeth. "I'll take it to the House of Lords. Could you identify that bullock?" sez he. "If you think you can I'll come back some evenin' an' assassinate the dirty brute. Go on home now, Pat. I'm in a bad temper. Don't say a word till ye hear from me."

Nothin' happened for the next four or five weeks, barrin' that old Mrs. McIlheron went back to Belfast and died there. But one day I got a note from Mr. Anthony to meet him at Fitzsimons's office.

When I went in there was Fitzsimons an' Jones sittin' as solemn as undertakers, an' Mr. Anthony smilin' like a basket of chips.

"By the hokey," sez I, "he's won after all."

"Now, gentlemen," sez Mr. Anthony, "you know why we've met—to hear the decision of the Golfin' Union. Well, here it is." We all craned forward. "'Mr. Fitzsimons wins the last hole an' the match.' There's your ten pounds, Fitzsimons," sez he. "You'd better bring a performin' goat next time, that'll swallow the ball altogether. But there's another communication I want to read you. It's a letter from Samuels an' Samuels, the solicitors in Belfast, to say that the late Mrs. McIlheron has left me a legacy of three hundred pounds in recognition of my gallant conduct in rescuin' her from the attack of a mad bull on the Ballygullion Golf Course. That leaves me two hundred an' ninety pounds up, Fitzsimons. Good day to you. Come on, Pat."

He aimed a bitter blow at the brier. Up went the ball in the air, an' lit on the green not six inches from the hole.

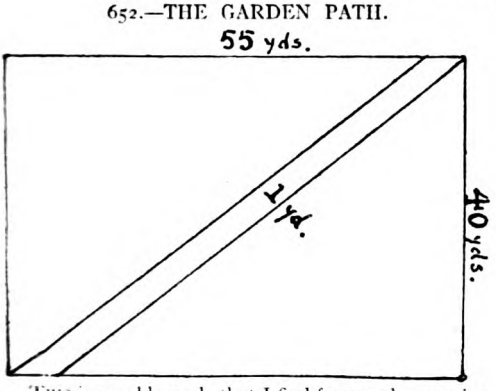
"Did you think, Pat Murphy," sez he, as we went down the road, "that I was such an ass as to let the game of golf interfere with my business? What did I care if that greedy crow of a bullock give himself appendicitis eatin' golf balls when I saw such a chance of clinchin' my position with a client, an' one with a weak heart, too. I may tell you I'm disappointed. I expected five hundred at the least."

I looked at him to see did he mean it; but he was payin' no attention to me at all.

"Yes," sez he. "Five hundred at the very least. But never mind, Pat," sez he, brightenin' up. "If I play Fitzsimons once a fortnight for ten pounds I'll have it up to five hundred by Christmas."

PERPLEXITIES. By Henry E. Dudeney.

652.—THE GARDEN PATH.



THIS is an old puzzle that I find frequently cropping up. Many find it perplexing, but it is easier than it looks. A man has a rectangular garden, 55 yards by 40 yards, and he makes a diagonal path, one yard wide, exactly in the manner indicated in the diagram. What is the area of the path? Dimensions for the garden are generally given that only admit of an approximate answer, but I select figures that will give an answer that is quite exact. The width of the path is exaggerated in the diagram for the sake of clearness.

653.—WORD MULTIPLICATION.

CAN you multiply together the two words A STEM and produce the word TEAMS? That is to say,

S T E M
A

T E A M S

Each letter represents a different digit and the o is not used.

654.—A NEW MEASURING PUZZLE.

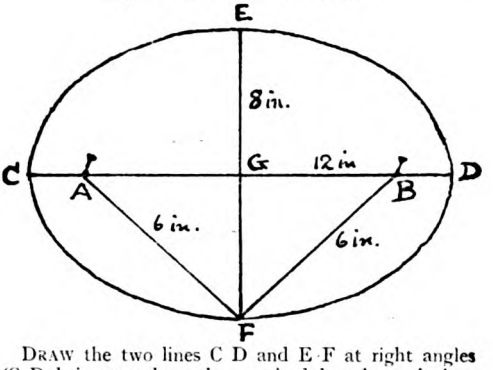
IN introducing liquid measuring puzzles in my book, "Amusements in Mathematics," I have said, "It is the general opinion that puzzles of this class can only be solved by trial, but I think formulæ can be constructed for the solution generally of certain related cases. It is a practically unexplored field for investigation." So far as I know, the hint has not been taken and the field is still unexplored, so I recently took advantage of a little unexpected leisure to look into the matter. The result, as I thought probable, was that I struck some new and very interesting things. For example, let us take the simplest possible case of a man who goes to a brook with only two vessels with which to measure a given quantity of water. When we are dealing, say, with a barrel of wine we may have complications arising from the barrel being full or empty, from its capacity and contents being known or unknown, from waste of wine being permitted or not permitted, and from pouring back into the barrel being allowed. All these points are eliminated. Is it then possible that any puzzle remains? Let us see. A man goes to the brook with two measures of 15 pints and 16 pints. How is he to measure exactly 8 pints of water, in the fewest possible transactions? Filling or emptying a vessel or pouring any quantity from one vessel to another counts as a transaction. The puzzle is not difficult, but I think the reader will find it very entertaining and instructive. I need hardly add that no tricks, such as marking or tilting the vessels, are allowed.

655.—BEHEADING.

BEHEAD a beast and you will find
A larger beast is left behind.
This is wonderful, you'll say.
A greater wonder I display.
Behead this larger beast, and then
Instead of one you'll find I'm ten

Solutions to Last Month's Puzzles.

649.—DRAWING AN OVAL.



DRAW the two lines C D and E F at right angles (C D being equal to the required length, 12 inches, and E F to the required breadth, 8 inches), intersecting midway. Find the points A and B, so that A F and F B each equals half the length C D, that is 6 inches, and place your pins at A and B, making the length of your loop of string equal to A B F A. Say the distance C A = x. Then, when the pencil is at F the length of string is $12 + (12 - 2x) = 24 - 2x$, and when the pencil is at C the length of string is $2(12 - x) = 24 - 2x$ also, proving the correctness of the solution.

650.—CRICKET SCORES.

THE four innings must have secured 128, 96, 72, and 54 runs respectively. Therefore the Muddletonians scored 200 against their opponents' 150 and beat them by 50 runs.

651.—BLOCK AND PIN PUZZLE.

THIS is my way of placing the sixteen pieces so that only five pieces can move. These five are all White's pieces—the Q, one R, one B, and both Kts. I expect this can still be beaten. Half of the board is omitted merely to save space.

644.—WRONG TO RIGHT.

A LARGE number of attempted solutions reached me. The best possible, in 10 links only, is WRONG, PRONG, PRONE, DRONE, DIONE, DION'S, SIONS, SIGNS, SIGHS, SIGHT, RIGHT. (Dione is Venus, and Dion the Syracusan.) This was sent by Rev. G. F. C. and H. G. independently. All others exceeded 12 links. Many overlooked the condition as to not altering the positions of letters.

TETHERSTONES

by

ETHEL M. DELL

ILLUSTRATED BY
P. B. HICKLING

SYNOPSIS OF THE OPENING CHAPTERS.

MONTAGUE ROTHERBY, just home from an expedition in Central Africa, is staying with his uncle, Dr. Rotherby, the Bishop of Burminster. He notices that the Bishop's secretary, Frances Thorold, is very near a breakdown in health through overwork, and is not surprised when she faints one morning during lunch. He helps to restore her, and in a conversation in the garden late that evening learns something of her position. This conversation is interrupted by the Bishop, who comes upon them in the moonlight.

"As I thought!" he said. "As I might have known! You may come out of your hiding-place. No subterfuge will serve either of you. Go—both of you! Let me never see you again!"

Montague Rotherby, who is thinking of writing a book on his travels, had already offered to engage Frances as his secretary, and on the Bishop's outburst she takes lodgings in a Devon village to restore her health before entering on her new duties. Here Montague discovers her. He explains that he is not yet ready to commence his book, and goes on to declare his passionate love for her.

Next day while on the moors they are overtaken by a thick mist, in which they lose their way. The mist turns to rain, and towards evening Frances becomes so exhausted that she faints, and on recovering finds that Rotherby has carried her into an old cattle shed. He again declares his love for her, and Frances, alarmed at the rising passion in his voice, is growing desperate when there comes to her through the dripping of the rain the sound of a child's voice. It is Ruth, a child she had already met in the village, who, being blind, is able to lead her back through the mist. Ruth takes her to her home, a farm known as Tetherstones, where Frances collapses.

A long and serious illness follows, during which the Dermots—the tenants of Tetherstones—do everything possible for her. During convalescence she becomes very friendly with the girls of the family, but is greatly puzzled by the personality of their brother Arthur, of whom all seem to stand in fear.

Then comes a letter from Rotherby—the first since her illness. "... They tell me you are better, but I can't meet you among strangers. When will you come to me? Come soon, Circe beloved! Come soon!"

PART II. *(continued).*

CHAPTER IV.

REBELS.

TWO days later Frances went out into the garden. She leaned upon Dolly's arm, for she was very weak, and Lucy came behind, carrying rugs and cushions. They settled her on a couch under the great cedar-tree that spread its branches over the lawn. It was a perfect summer morning. From across the field that bordered the old garden there came the babble of the stream.

Presently she began to grow drowsy, and was actually on the verge of slumber when a rustling sound close at hand suddenly recalled her.

The rustling ceased immediately, but she had an acute sense of being watched that sent a strange uneasiness through her. She

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made an effort to raise herself into a sitting position and to turn her head in the direction whence the sound had come.

At first she perceived nothing, for a screen of nut-trees that bounded an orchard beyond the garden effectually concealed everything else from sight. Then, as though drawn by some magnetism, her eyes became riveted. She saw two other eyes peering at her through the leaves, and vaguely discerned a figure, crouched and motionless, a few yards from her.

She lay very still, not moving, not daring to breathe.

Suddenly from across the lawn she heard the deep tones of a man's voice. She turned her eyes swiftly in the direction whence it came, and, with a throb of mingled relief and embarrassment, saw Arthur Dermot crossing the grass towards her, little Ruth holding his hand. She glanced back swiftly again into the green of the nut-trees, but the space whence those eyes had glared so fixedly at her was empty. Without a sound the watcher had gone.

"Miss Thorold!" said a voice.

She looked up with an effort, seeing Arthur through a mist. "I am quite all right. Just—just a passing faintness! It is nothing—really nothing!"

She heard herself uttering the words, but she could not lift her voice above a whisper. At the touch of a quiet hand laid upon her own, she knew she started violently.

"It has been too much for you, coming out here," he said.

"I am quite all right," she assured him again, tremulously. "I am only sorry—to have given—so much trouble."

"That's not the way to look at it," he said.

She felt his fingers close upon her wrist, and wondered a little, for there was something very quieting in his touch.

"You mustn't attempt too much at a time," he said. "Square told me so only two days ago. You are not wanting to leave us yet, are you?"

"I must go—yes. I have been here much too long as it is."

His fingers left her wrist, but he still stood above her motionless, looking straight down at her.

"May I ask a question?" he said, suddenly.

She felt herself colour. There was something unexpected about this man. She wondered why he embarrassed her so. She tried to smile in answer to his words, though his expression was grave to sombreness. "If it isn't too hard a one," she said.

"It's only this," he said, in his quiet, rather ponderous fashion. "Have you anywhere to go to—if you leave us?"

"Why, yes, of course I have. I have—a brother."

"A brother?" he said.

She found herself explaining further as if under compulsion. "Yes, in the North—a business man. He would take me in."

"Have you any intention of asking him to?" Somehow the question stung her. It was so direct, so unerring, like the flick of a whip-lash. She dropped her eyes before his look. "I can do so," she said, with pride.

"Do you intend to?" he insisted.

She did not answer. Before that straight regard she could not lie.

He waited a moment or two, then, to her surprise, he sat down upon the grass by her side. "Ruth," he said to the blind child standing silently beside him, "go to the house and find my tobacco-pouch! Maggie is in the dairy. She will know where it is."

Ruth went with instant obedience, and Arthur Dermot took off his cap and laid it on the grass.

"Now, Miss Thorold," he said, "I am going to ask you another question."

She lay in silence, waiting.

WHEN he spoke again, she knew he was looking at her, but she did not meet his look.

"I want to know," he said, "what it was that scared you so up at the Stones the night you came to us."

"Ah!" She made a quick movement of protest. "I can't tell you that," she said

He was silent for a space, but she was conscious of his eyes still upon her, and she had an urgent desire to escape from their scrutiny.

"Someone was up there with you," he said, suddenly.

She clenched her hands to check the swift leap of her heart. "I don't think you have any right—to press me like this," she said, her voice very low.

"No right whatever," he agreed, and in his quiet rejoinder she caught an unexpected note of relief. "I knew you had had a fright, and the Stones have a bad name hereabouts. I wondered what bogy had frightened you. But apparently it wasn't a bogy this time."

He smiled a little with the words, and she felt the tension relax. She lifted her eyes and met a gleam of friendliness in his.

"No," she said; "it wasn't a bogy."

After a moment he went on, his jaw set in the fighting fashion she had come to associate with him. "All this is beside the point, though you've satisfied me in one particular. Now, Miss Thorold, to return

to the charge! Why must you go from here before you are fit?"

"I am going to work," said Frances, with decision.

"What is your work?" he asked.

She answered him without reserve, for his manner had undergone a change. "I am a typist. I have been secretary to the Bishop of Burminster."

"Burminster!" He repeated the name sharply. "What is his name?"

"Dr. Rotherby."

"Ah!" She saw his face twist suddenly, as if at a spasm of pain. "That man!" He ground the words between his teeth.

"Yes, that man! Do you know him?"

She asked the question with a certain hesitation, but he answered it immediately. "I knew him once—before he came to Burminster."

Arthur Dermot picked up his cap and began to turn it in his hands, moodily meditative.

"Well," Frances said, after a moment, "that is a closed chapter now. I am looking out for another post."

"They are not very easy to find, are they?" he said.

The indomitable courage that Montague Rotherby had admired in her sounded in her reply. "Of course they are not easy. That's just the best of life. We've got to work for everything worth having."

"Some of us have to work for what isn't," he said.

"Yes. I've done that too," she answered.

He lifted his eyes abruptly to hers, dark eyes that seemed to her to hold a curious protest. "And you've found it worth while?" he said.

She countered the question. "Have you?"

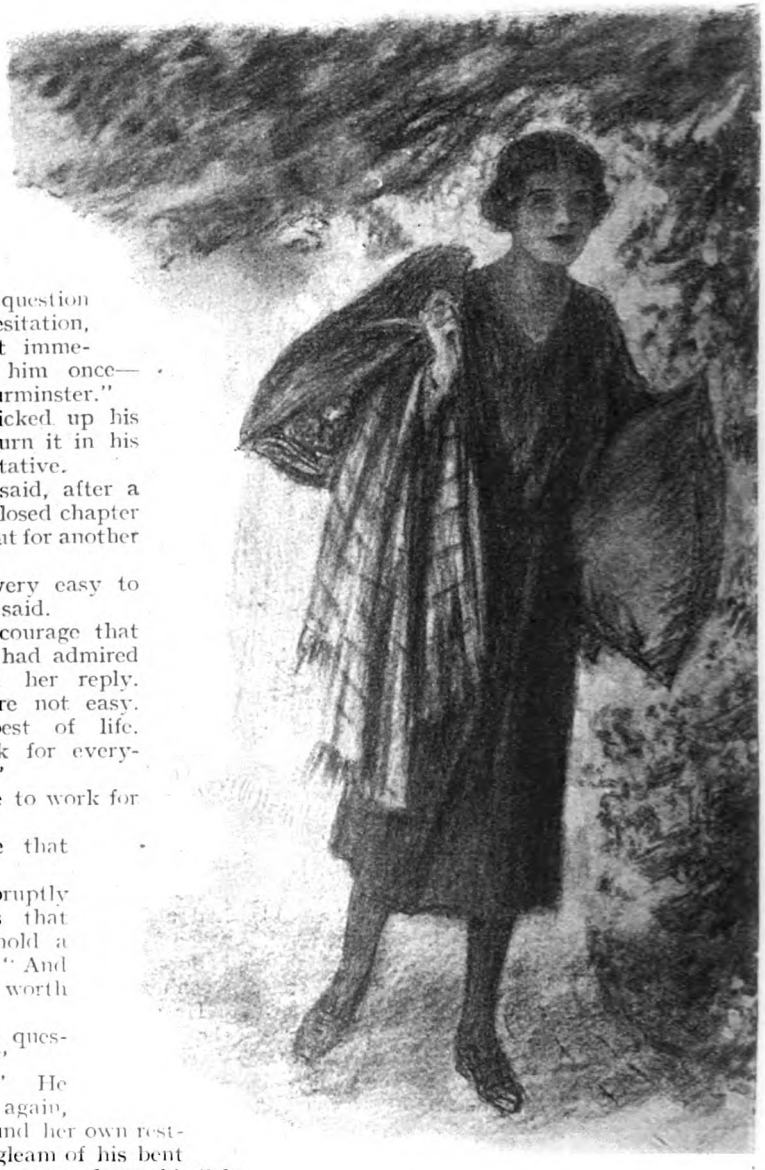
"I don't know." He dropped his eyes again, moodily, and she found her own resting upon the silvery gleam of his bent head. "Life can be pretty damnable," he said, "most particularly to those who have a sense of duty."

"It is more damnable if we rebel," said Frances, quietly.

"You speak as one who knows," he said.

"Yes. I do know." She uttered the words with conviction. "I have been a rebel. But that is over. I am going back now to work in the furrows—if a place can be found for me."

He frowned at her words. "Those infernal furrows! We plough our very souls



Two days later Frances went out into

into the soil! And to what end? Of what use?"

"So you are a rebel too!" said Frances, with the suspicion of a smile.

He threw her his sudden, challenging look, and she thought he was angry. But in a moment, sombrely, with eyes downcast, he made answer. "Yes, I am a rebel too."

There fell a silence between them that was curiously sympathetic. Frances reflected later that it was that silence that banished all her former embarrassment.

He looked up at her again at length. "Miss Thorold, I want to ask you something, and I don't know how to put it. I've lived among clods too long to express myself with much delicacy. Will you make allowances for that?"

She met his look with frankness. "You do not need to ask me that," she said.

"Thank you." His eyes held hers with

the garden. She leaned upon Dolly's arm, for she was very weak.

a certain mastery, notwithstanding the humility of his address. "I have no intention of being offensive, I assure you. But I know—I can't help knowing—that you have come through a pretty bad passage lately. I don't want to ask anything about it. I only want to lend a hand to help you back to firm ground. Will you let me do this?"

"I have already accepted too much from you," she said.

His look hardened. "I know. So you think. But you only see one point of view. I want you to realize that there is another. And if you leave Tetherstones now, well, you won't have done all you might towards lessening what I believe you regard as an obligation."

"What do you mean?" she said. "I thought you wanted me to go."

"You thought wrong," he returned, with finality. "There is room for you here, and no reason whatever why you should go back to old Mrs. Trehearn."

Instinctively she sought to temporize. "It would be quite impossible for me to stay on here indefinitely. You have all been much too kind to me already, and I couldn't—I really couldn't."

"Wait!" he said. "I haven't suggested your doing that. I know you wouldn't. What I do suggest is that you should stay here to convalesce while you are looking about for another post. Can't you do that as easily here as with your brother in the North, for instance?"

She smiled a little at his words, but she shook her head. "I can't go on living on your kindness, and I have so very little money left. You must understand how impossible it would be. But we will talk of this again," she said, gently. "Meanwhile, I am very, very grateful to you, and —I will stay a little longer—if I may."

"Thank you," he said.

He got to his feet with the words. She thought he was going to take her hand, then suddenly she saw him stiffen, and realized that they were no longer alone.

She raised herself to see the bent figure of an old man coming towards them over the grass.

CHAPTER V.

MR. DERMOT.

"MY father!" said Arthur Dermot.

The old man had reached them. He stood, leaning on a knotted stick, looking at her. Again she marvelled, for it was the face of a scholar—a dreamer—that she beheld. It had the grey hue of one who seldom moves in the sunshine. The eyes were drawn as if they did not see very clearly or were continually looking for something beyond their range of vision. His hair was snowy white. She thought he must be very old.

"Is this our visitor from the moors?" he asked, in a feeble tenor voice that somehow stirred her compassion.

"Yes—Miss Thorold." Arthur's reply was curt, almost as if he resented the old man's presence. His whole attitude was uncompromising.

"I am very pleased to meet you," said Mr. Dermot, courteously addressing Frances. "I was so grieved to hear of the unfortunate result of your adventure. I trust you are now nearly restored to your normal health?"

"Yes. I came here for a rest. It was foolish of me to get lost by the Stones," said Frances, smiling ruefully. "I shall never do that again."

"It is a very interesting spot," said Mr. Dermot. "A Druidical circle—according to some—though others believe it to be the result of a volcanic upheaval many thousands of years ago. I myself hold the former theory. There are certain marks which in my opinion can only have been made by iron staples. This supports the current belief that Druidical victims were chained there previous to sacrifice. Hence the name of Tetherstones."

He uttered the word deliberately, with a smile towards his son, who stood on one side fidgeting uneasily.

"Little Ruth has been telling me about them," Frances said.

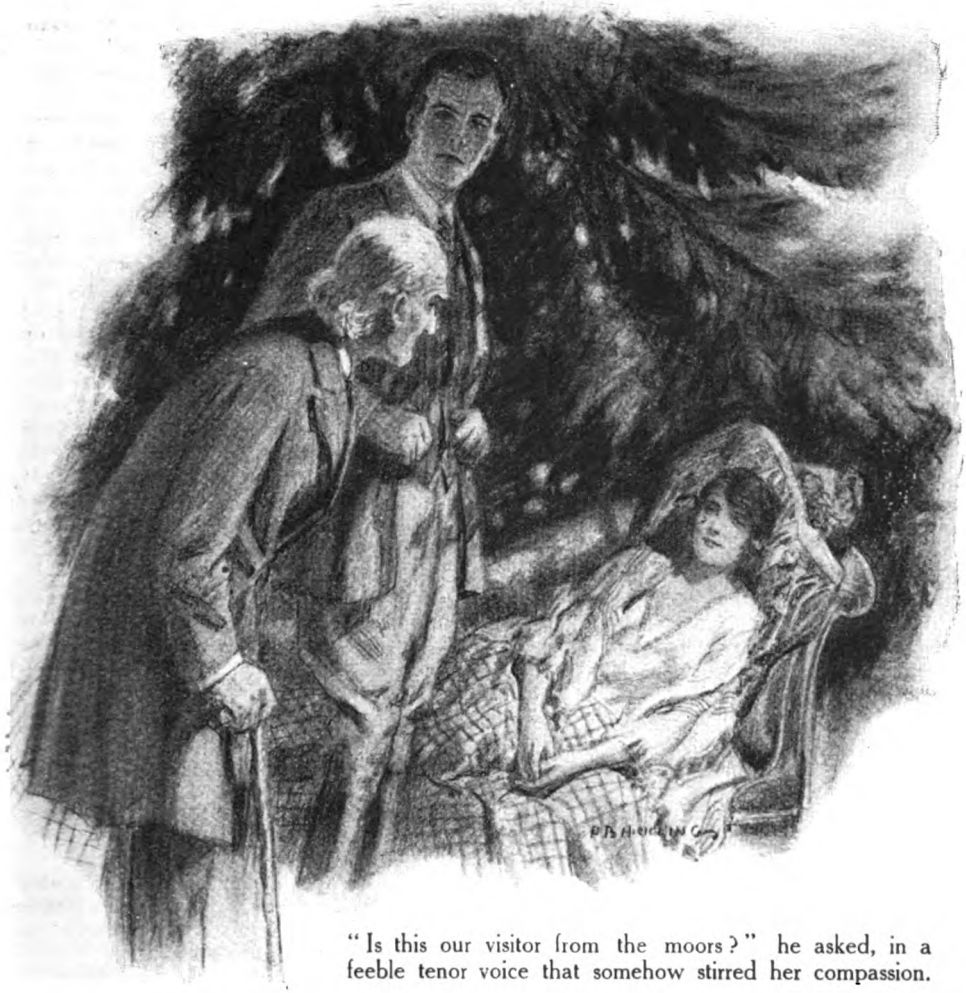
"Ah! The child! The little blind child who lives with us! Yes, yes, of course, the child!" The old man's voice was suddenly vague. "It is strange how little her infirmity hampers her," he said, after a moment. "I sometimes think she has an inner vision that serves her more effectually than physical sight."

"She seems wonderfully happy," Frances said.

"Yes, yes, she is always happy—like—like—another child I used to know." Old Mr. Dermot's eyes took a sudden pathetic look. "I lost that child," he said. "There are a great many others—a great many others; but she was the darling of them all." He turned with sudden querulousness upon the younger man standing silently by. "Why are you waiting here?"

"I am waiting for Ruth," his son made quiet rejoinder, without the movement of a muscle. "I have sent her to fetch something."

Mr. Dermot's fine mouth curved satirically. "My son likes to be waited upon," he observed to Frances. "When you are well enough, he will make use of you too



"Is this our visitor from the moors?" he asked, in a feeble tenor voice that somehow stirred her compassion.

We all have to work for him. He is a hard taskmaster."

Frances smiled. "I shall be only too glad to be of use to any of you," she said. "I am very much in your debt at present."

"Oh, nonsense, nonsense!" he returned, paternally. "We do not talk of debts at Tetherstones. Nor do we let our visitors work Unless"—he smiled back at her with a kindliness that won its way to her heart—"you would like to help me, perhaps. I am writing a book on the Stones."

"Miss Thorold is not well enough to do anything at present," said Arthur, with brief decision. "We must not worry her. Remember, she is an invalid, and she must be treated as such."

"You must let me try," Frances said, gently. "I should like to try."

"You may try if you like," said Mr. Dermot. "But my moments of inspiration are getting rare. Yet I should like to have finished that book when I come to die. It is good to leave something behind to mark where one fell."

The dreaminess of tone and words smote upon her senses like a knell. She tried to find some comforting words, but they were checked by the sight of Ruth coming across the grass in her light, confident fashion. They all watched her, as it were by common consent. She was singing to herself, her little tuneless song, as she reached them.

"May I have my pouch?" said Arthur.

She had it in her hand. She turned and gave it to him. "And there is a letter for Miss Thorold. Old Mrs. Trehearn has just brought it."

Silently Arthur handed it to her. One glance at the address was enough. She could not control the swift tremor that

went through her as she murmured her thanks.

"And Dr. Square is here," said Ruth. "He is drinking elder-flower wine in the kitchen. He told me to say he is just coming out to see Miss Thorold."

"Then we will go," said Mr. Dermot, turning towards the couch with a courteous gesture. "Miss Thorold, I hope I have not tired you. You are very pale. When next I have the pleasure of seeing you, I shall be bringing you my book to read."

He went, Ruth treading lightly by his side, noiseless and dainty as a scrap of thistledown.

Arthur had not stirred from his post by the foot of the couch. He stood there massively, filling his pipe. And Frances lay, breathing quickly, her letter unopened in her hand.

Suddenly the man's eyes looked across at her, straight and challenging. "Aren't you going to read it?" he said.

She quivered at the abrupt question. She knew that she could not open that letter in his presence.

He realized the fact instantly, and she saw an odd gleam of triumph in his eyes. He turned and picked up his cap.

"All right. I'm going. But don't forget—whatever he has to say—you've promised to stay here for the present!"

He was gone with the words, striding away towards the house, leaving her oddly disconcerted and unsure of herself.

And meantime—meantime that second letter from Montague Rotherby was yet unopened in her trembling hand.

CHAPTER VI.

MAGGIE.

IT was still unopened when Dr. Square came out of the house with Dolly, and at his approach Frances pushed it behind a cushion.

Whether he noted any agitation on her part or not she could not say, but he was very emphatic in his orders to her to rest, and impressed upon Dolly the necessity for absolute quiet. Then he departed, and before she could open her letter Milly came out with her work and a chair, and sat down beside her with the evident intention of remaining. Milly was the silent one of the family, a shy, diffident girl who shared Ruth's adoration for her mother, but had little in common with the rest. She was stitching at a flannel shirt for Arthur, and she worked steadily without lifting her eyes.

Frances did not attempt any conversation. She was very tired, and the thought of that letter which could only be read in solitude burdened her. She had not answered the first, and he had written again so soon!

Oliver's cheery voice across the lawn diverted her attention. He was leaning on the sill of the dairy window, talking jauntily to someone within. She liked Oliver—Oliver Twist as they called him, on account, she had discovered, of a slight limp, the result of a kick on the knee in his boyhood. He had a gay personality that appealed to her, and the comic flash of his daring blue eyes was a thing to remember. He was never depressed, whatever the weather.

He was plainly enjoying himself on this occasion, and presently a ringing laugh in unison with his told her who was the companion of his idle moments. There was only one person at Tetherstones who ever laughed like that.

Milly glanced up nervously from her work at the sound, but made no comment. Only, as the distant figure suddenly leapt the sill and disappeared into the dairy, she coloured very deeply as if ashamed.

Frances closed her eyes with the reflection that Milly must be something of a prude, when a sudden commotion rekindled her interest and she opened them again in time to see Oliver come hurtling through the window with amazing force, to land on his back in a bed of mignonette. With amazement that seemed to choke her she saw Arthur, his head lowered like an infuriated bull, draw back from the window into the dairy.

"Good heavens!" said Frances.

The glimpse of Arthur's face, dead-white, a mask of anger, had set her pulses wildly throbbing. She watched tensely to see what Oliver would do.

What he did amazed her almost more than his first involuntary gymnastic. He got up from the mignonette laughing as if he had just come out of a football scrum, straightened his attire without the smallest hint of discomfiture, and coolly vaulted back through the window into the dairy.

"Ah!" whispered Milly, and held her breath.

She clearly expected some further act of violence, and trembled for the young man's safety. Frances also watched with keen anxiety. But at the end of many seconds she began to realize that the episode was over. No one approached the window again.

Milly drew a deep breath and resumed her work in silence.

The rest of the morning passed uneventfully, save that Oliver presently appeared, unabashed and cheery of mien, armed with a hoe, and proceeded, whistling, to restore order in the bed of crushed mignonette. Then Dolly came out with her midday

meal, after which the sisters took her back to her room to rest. She slept deeply during the afternoon, only awaking when the shadows were beginning to grow long. Then, looking forth from her window, there came to her the sudden memory of the letter she had forgotten. A gleam of something white under the cedar-tree where her couch had been caught her eye, and she realized immediately that it must have fallen there when they gathered up her rugs.

There was no one to send for her letter, and that sense of shame with which the bare thought of Rotherby now inspired her urged her strongly not to leave it for any chance comer to discover. She got up from her bed and slipped on her shoes. She was already dressed, and she only paused to throw around her a shawl that Dolly had left handy. Then, with an odd feeling of guilt, she opened her door and went out into the dark oak passage.

The stairs were steep and winding. The dizziness of weakness came upon her as she reached them, and she hung upon the rail of the banisters to gather her forces.

IN those moments of semi-helplessness there came to her the sound of voices talking in the kitchen below. Resolutely she summoned her strength, and, conquering her giddiness, began to descend. Her heart was thumping uncontrollably, and her legs were almost refusing to support her by the time she reached the last stair. It was necessity rather than expediency that induced her to sit down there at the foot to gather her forces afresh.

So sitting, there came to her words at first dimly, then with a growing meaning which, too late she realized, were never intended for her ears to hear.

"I'd do it in a minute—you know I would"—it was Maggie's voice, but strangely devoid of its customary cheery lilt—"if it weren't for mother. But—I believe it would kill her if another of us went wrong."

"I'm not asking you to go wrong!" Swift and decided came the answer in Oliver's voice. "I wouldn't do such a thing. I love you too much for that. Good heavens! Don't you think your honour is as dear to me as it is to your mother—or Arthur?"

"Yes, but——" Unmistakable distress sounded in Maggie's rejoinder. She gave a little sob and left it at that.

"Well, then!" said Oliver, in the tone of one who scores a triumph.

There was a brief pause, then a sudden movement, followed by a muffled whisper from Maggie that was half protest and half appeal. "I don't know what Arthur would say. He'd half-kill you."

"Rot!" said Oliver. "Once you were married to me, he'd have to come into line."

"No—no, he wouldn't! You don't understand." Maggie's answer came with a sound of tears. "You don't know him if you think that. He would simply kick you out of the place. And mother—mother would break her heart if I went too."

"But what are you going to wait for?" There was a hint of exasperation in Oliver's query. "I don't see what we gain by waiting. You're twenty-eight. I'm thirty-two. We've both of us waited five years as it is."

"Yes—yes! But let's go on waiting—there's a darling. Something'll happen some day. Something's sure to happen. And then we'll get married." Urgent entreaty backed the words. "It's no good getting married if we can't live together. And we—we—we are—very happy—as we are."

More tears followed the assurance. Maggie was evidently aware of pleading a lost cause.

Vigorously Oliver overruled her argument. "Well, anyway, you marry me and see!"

"Ah, but I'm afraid. The beast—the beast might do you a mischief!"

There was almost a wail in Maggie's words, but Oliver's hearty laugh drowned it. "Bless the girl! What next? Seems I'd better carry a pitchfork about with me. No; now listen! I'll fix it all up, and I won't even tell you till it's all cut and dried. Then one day you and I'll go into Fordestown to market, and when we come back we'll——" Inarticulate whispering ended the sentence. "There now! Will you do that?"

There came a pause, then Oliver's cheery voice. "There now! Don't you fret yourself! You may take it from me it is right. And I'm going into Fordestown to-morrow to get it settled."

Broken sounds came from Maggie that brought Frances to an abrupt realization of her position. She straightened herself and got up. Her knees were still trembling, but she forced them into action. She tottered down the passage to the nearest door and out on to the brick path that led to the garden.

The lawn lay beyond. It was farther than she had thought, and her strength was failing her. She came upon a rough bench set against the wall out of sight of the house, and dropped down upon it with a feeling that she could go no farther.

How long she had sat there she could not have said, for she was very near to fainting, when there came the sound of a man's feet on the path beside her, and, looking up, she

saw Arthur in his shirt-sleeves, a spade on his shoulder.

He stopped beside her and drove his spade into the ground.

"Miss Thorold!" he said. "What are you doing here? Why did you come out?"

She hesitated to answer him. Then: "I dropped a letter," she said. "It is under the cedar-tree. I just thought I would fetch it."

"You must be mad," he said. "Stay here while I fetch it!"

He strode away, and she sat and waited till his return.

"The letter is not there," he said, briefly. "Does it matter?"

"No," she said, and wondered what impulse moved her to utter the word.

"You are sure?" he said.

She smiled a little at his insistence. "Yes, quite sure. Please don't trouble about it! It will probably turn up later."

He dropped the subject without further discussion. "I had better carry you back now," he remarked, and in a moment the strong brown arms encompassed her.

She abandoned protest. Somehow he made her feel like a child, and she knew that resistance was useless. It was not a dignified situation, but it appealed to her sense of humour, and as he bore her solidly back along the path between the hollyhocks she uttered a breathless little laugh.

There was no sound of voices as he entered the house, and Frances breathed a sigh of thankfulness.

He carried her straight through and up to her room. "I hope you will not attempt that again before you are fit for it," he said, as he deposited her upon the bed.

"Thank you very much. I hope I shall soon be fit," said Frances.

He lingered in the doorway, his rugged

face in shadow. "I hope you won't," he said suddenly and unexpectedly, and in a moment flung away down the passage awkwardly, precipitately, as if he feared he had stayed too long.

So sitting, there came to her words which, too late she realized, were never intended for her ears to hear.

CHAPTER VII.

THE PATH THROUGH THE WILDERNESS.

FRANCES slept badly that night. There were a good many things to trouble her and keep her brain at work. The thought of Maggie's clandestine love affair worried her most, though why this should have been so she could not have said. There seemed to be a league among the sisters against their brother's authority,

and she felt that against her will she had been drawn into it. She would have given anything not to have overheard that talk in the kitchen, but she found it impossible to forget it.

Of her own affairs, of Montague Rotherby, she thought but little that night. The inner voice that had so urgently warned her no longer spoke within her soul. The need was past. Inexplicably, the attraction of the man had gone with it. The loss of her letter had vexed her temporarily, but now she had almost forgotten it. By her silence she would sever all connection with him.

With the early morning came sleep that lasted till the sun was high, and Ruth came in to perch on her bed while she breakfasted. She had been out in the cornfields, she said. They were cutting the corn in the field below the Stones. Perhaps they might go there to-day if Uncle Arthur would take them in the dog-cart. The idea attracted Frances, though she only smiled. The day was hot, and she was feeling better.

She did not know that the child had read acquiescence in her silence till later, when Dolly suddenly announced that the cart would be round in half an hour, and they must hurry.

It had evidently been all talked over and arranged beforehand, and Frances had no objection to raise. In fact, the prospect delighted her.

"I should like to take my sketching-block," she said. "And I shall be quite happy."

So, armed with her beloved box of paints and brushes, she presently descended to find Arthur waiting somewhat moodily at the door with a cob harnessed to a light dog-cart. His dark face brightened at the sight of her.

"Better this morning?" he asked, as she came out.

She smiled at him, panting from her descent of the stairs, but resolutely ignoring her weakness. "Yes, I am much better. I am as strong as a horse to-day."

Almost before she knew it, Frances found herself lifted on to the high seat, where Arthur wrapped a rug about her knees and pushed a cushion behind her.

They were out in the winding lane before she found breath to ask for Ruth. "Won't she come with us? Have you forgotten her?"

"We never trouble about Ruth," he replied. "She finds her own way everywhere. She will probably go across the stepping-stones and get there first."

THEY came out upon an open road and went like the wind. The day was glorious, the distant tors all blue and purple in the sunshine. They followed a direction she had never explored, and presently turned off up a wide track that seemed to wind into the very heart of the hills. They came presently to a track crossing the one they were following.

He reined in as if he had reached his destination. Frances looked about her. The place was lonely beyond description. Here and there vast boulders pushed through the short grass, surrounded by tufts of heather that seemed to be trying to hide their nakedness. They were closely surrounded by hills, and the gurgle of an invisible stream filled the air with music.

Arthur pointed suddenly with his whip along the track they faced. "You and Roger!" he said. "Don't you remember?"

She uttered a gasp of surprise. "Why—yes! But was it here?"

"It was round the curve of that hill," he said. "Afterwards, you came on here alone, and lost your way, took the wrong turning. Remember?"

"I wanted to get to Fordestown," she said. "But I was tired. I fell asleep."

He nodded. "And then you wandered up to the Stones."

She felt herself colour. With an effort she answered him. "It wasn't quite like that. I met a friend, or rather—he found me here. We got lost in the fog. That was how it happened."

"Yes," said Arthur.

They went on up the lonely track. She tried to picture her walk with Montague through the blinding fog. Here she had slipped into bog, there she had stumbled among stones. Then as now, the vague sounds of running water had filled the desolation as with eerie, chanting voices.

She experienced a swift, almost overwhelming desire to turn back.

It must have communicated itself to the man beside her, for he checked the animal with a curt word and brought the swaying cart to a standstill.

"Miss Thorold, what is it? Have I brought you too far?"

The concern in his voice reassured her. She met his look with a smile.

"No! I am quite all right. It is only my foolish imagination—playing tricks with me. I am longing to see the Stones. I think this is rather a dreadful place, don't you? It makes one think of"—she stumbled a little—"of human sacrifice. Do you hold your father's theory about the Stones?"

"I seldom agree with my father about anything," he returned, sombrely. "Yes, you are right. This is a dreadful place. It has a bad name, as I told you before."

They went on up the grassy track, mounting steadily. The rocky nature of the ground became more and more

"I had better carry you back now," he remarked, and in a moment the strong brown arms encompassed her.

pronounced as they proceeded. The grass grew more sparsely, though the tufts of heather continued.

"Are you frightened?" Arthur asked abruptly.

"No," said Frances.

"You were frightened the last time you came," he said.

"Oh, that was different. It was foggy. I was lost."

He turned his eyes deliberately away and stared at the horse's ears. "Would you be frightened now," he said, "if a fog came up and you didn't know the way?"

"Not with you to guide me," she said.

"Thank you," he said, quietly.

The hills closed gradually in upon the track till it was little more than a narrow passage, winding among boulders. The horse's feet clattered upon stones. Quite suddenly the path mounted steeply between two large rocks and disappeared.

"Can we possibly get up there?" said Frances.

The man beside her made no reply. He merely struck the animal with the whip, so that he plunged at the steep ascent, and in a few moments was clambering up it with desperate effort. The cart rocked and jolted, and Frances clung to the rail. They reached the two grey rocks at the summit, and passed between them on to a flat open space that shone green in the sunshine.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE STONES.

THEY stood up all around, forming a great amphitheatre—the great, grey stones that had weathered so many centuries. Stark and grim, sentinels of the ages, they stood in their changeless circle, as they had stood in the early days of the world ere men had learned to subdue the earth.

Frances sat and gazed and gazed with a curious feeling of reverence upon that forgotten place of sacrifice.

And then she turned to the man by her side. "It reminds me of the days when you were a Roman gladiator and I was one of the slaves who sprinkled the sawdust in the arena."

He looked at her with his brooding eyes. "So you were a slave?" he said.

"I have always been one," she answered, with a quizzical lifting of the brows.

"You were not intended for a slave," he said.

She smiled a little. "May I get down? I should like to walk here."

He jumped to the ground and turned to help her, the reins over his arm.

She slipped down into his hold. "There is nothing to frighten anyone here," she said.

Even as she spoke her heart misgave her a little. The Stones looked more imposing from the ground. Some of them had an almost threatening aspect. They seemed to crouch like gigantic monsters about to spring.

"It is certainly a wonderful place," she said. "And the farm is close by?"

"Just down the hill on the other side," he said. "It takes its name from them. Some bygone race probably used the place for sacrifice. The actual tetherstones to which the victims were said to have been fastened are over there, close to the cattle shed in which Ruth found you. The shed is just out of sight below the brow of the hill."

She relinquished his arm and began to walk a few steps over the grass. The man stood motionless, watching her. His brows were drawn. He had a waiting look.

Suddenly she turned and came back to him. She shivered sharply, standing in the full sunshine. "I don't want to be left alone here."

"No," he said, in his brief way. "And I don't mean you to be here alone." He put out a hand and pointed to a curiously shaped stone so poised that it seemed to be on the point of rolling towards them. "Do you see that? That is one of the great tetherstones. It is called the stone of sacrifice. It is so balanced that a child could make it rock, but no one could move it from its place. There are marks on that stone that scientists declare have been made by human hands, places where staples have been driven in, and so cunningly devised that prisoners chained to those staples were unharmed so long as they remained passive. But the moment they strained for freedom, the stone rocked slowly to and fro and they were crushed—gradually ground to death."

"Oh, don't!" Frances cried. "How gruesome—how horrible!"

"A devil's paradise!" he said.

He helped her back into the cart and wrapped the rug about her knees. As he did so, with his face turned from her he spoke again in a tone that affected her very strangely.

"Miss Thorold, I haven't told you everything. There is a much more modern tragedy connected with this place which I haven't told you of. It isn't a subject that is ever mentioned among us, and I can't go into any details. But—you've probably discovered by this time that there is

something that makes us different from the rest of the world. It is—that."

He spoke with an effort, and for the first time in all her knowledge of men there came to Frances that tender, motherly feeling that comes to every

Suddenly she came back to him, and shivered sharply, standing in the full sunshine. "I don't want to be left alone here."

woman when she is face to face with a man's suffering.

She sat for a moment or two without moving or speaking; then she put out a hesitating hand and touched his shoulder. "I am sorry," she said, very gently.

He drew in his breath sharply, but still he did not look at her. "I have never spoken of it to anyone outside before. But you are somehow different. You have been through the mill, and you are capable of understanding."

"I hope so," she said.

He jerked up his head with an odd movement of defiance. "There's one thing I would like you to know," he said. "Though I am no more than a country clod and grind my living out of the stones, I've made a success of it. There's not a single farmer hereabouts who can say that he has a better show than mine. In fact, they know quite well that Tetherstones beats them all."

"That was worth doing," said Frances.

"Yes. It was worth doing. But now that it's done, anyone could run it—anyone with any experience. Oliver could run it." He spoke contemptuously.

"Then why not let him," suggested Frances, "and take a holiday yourself?"

"Let him!" He turned upon her almost violently. "Leave Oliver to run this show? You don't know——" He pulled himself up. "Of course you don't know. How should you? Oliver is very useful, but he is only a labourer after all. I don't see myself putting him in my place. He thinks too much of himself as it is."

He looked at her hard with the words, as if challenging a reply. But Frances made none. Her years of rigorous work had taught her to maintain silence where she felt speech to be futile. She never wasted her words.

And in a moment Arthur relaxed. "I couldn't leave my post in any case," he said. "There are—other reasons."

"Yes," Frances said, glad of the change of topic. "On account of your mother," she said. "I guessed that."

His face changed, softening magically. "Yes, my mother," he said. "But what made you guess it?"

"It just came to me," she said. "I knew you must be fond of someone."

He looked away from her to a gap of blue distance in front of them, and for a few seconds there was silence between them. Then: "Thank you for saying that," he said, "and for thinking it. You have an extraordinary insight."

The sound of the reaping-machine came whirring through the sunlit silence, and the man pulled himself together with a gesture of impatience. "Well, I suppose we must go. You have seen the Stones, and I hope you are satisfied."

"I am glad you brought me," she said. "But I don't think I shall come again."

He mounted into the cart beside her and walked the horse forward over the grass.

"There is little Ruth," said Frances.

The child had come suddenly into view from behind one of the great stones, moving as was her wont lightly and fearlessly, her face upturned. She was carrying a small bunch of harebells, and as she came towards them she stooped and felt among the grass for more.

"How happy she is!" whispered Frances.

THE man said nothing. He walked the horse straight up to the little kneeling figure and reined in beside it.

"Is that you, Uncle Arthur?" said little Ruth.

"Yes," he said. "Come here to me and I will take you back to the cornfield!"

She got up and came to him. He stooped and grasped her shoulder, guiding her to the step.

"Is Miss Thorold there?" said the child.

"Yes, darling. I am here," Frances answered, and made room for her on the seat.

Ruth mounted the step, and in a moment nestled in beside her. "I gathered these flowers for you," she said.

"Thank you, darling." Frances took the flowers and stooped to kiss her.

They passed on through the great circle and out between the stones on to a narrow track that led steeply downwards to a lane.

The buzz of a car rose from below them as they approached it, and Arthur drew in his horse. The car went by unseen, but to Frances in the high cart there came a sudden, sharp sense of insecurity that was almost panic, and for a moment she ceased to breathe. She knew that car.

Her agitation subsided gradually. They went on down the lane and turned into the cornfield.

"I must leave you here," Arthur said.

He helped them both down and settled them comfortably with a rug and cushions in the shade of the hedge, then smiled and turned away.

Roger came up and lay down beside them. The peace of a perfect day descended upon the harvest-field. The fragrance of the cut corn was like an oblation.

"Are we alone?" said Ruth.

"Yes, darling. Why?"

The little girl came pressing close to her side. "Because I've got something to tell you, and it's a secret. I met a man to-day in the lane who said he was a friend of yours. He didn't tell me who he was, but it was the friend who wrote that letter to you. And he said—would I tell you that he will be at the Stones again to-night at ten?"

(*To be continued.*)

That "Kruschen" Feeling!

Here's the dear old boy again—just brimming over with high spirits and the sheer joy of living.

He gets up every morning feeling that he could do the staircase in one. He greets the day with a smile, and his friends with the hearty hand-clasp of real good-fellowship.

He is welcome wherever he goes—no one can resist his cheery way of always looking on the bright side of things.

Do *you* feel like this ?

If not, there's something wrong. You think it's your nature. It isn't—it's your HEALTH.

Just consider. You are probably getting too little fresh air and exercise—perhaps you spend too much time sitting over your daily tasks, and as a result you get run down with worry, overwork, or errors of diet. Consequently, you need a corrective. You need Kruschen Salts.

Kruschen contains just the six salts, blended in just the right proportion, that are essential to keep you in continual good health. Under their tonic influence the liver and kidneys eliminate ALL waste matter. Your whole body is braced and revived.

The dose is only "as much as will lie on a sixpence," and you can't taste it in your breakfast cup of tea. A 1s. 9d. bottle contains 96 morning "pinches"—good health and youthful spirits for less than a farthing a day!

Kruschen Salts

Good Health for a Farthing a Day

Tasteless in Tea

The ingredients of Kruschen Salts are necessary for healthy life. Your body must, of necessity, obtain these ingredients from somewhere, or you could not live.

Normally, your system should extract these vital salts from your food—meat, bread, fruit, vegetables, milk, eggs, and so on; but when, owing to impaired digestion, errors of diet, overwork and worry, anxiety, sedentary occupation, and many other causes, your system does not extract from your food the correct proportions of these essential life-giving salts, then you suffer from depression, headaches, constipation, or disordered liver. Kruschen Salts should be your safeguard. Besides cleansing the body of impurities, gently, surely, and painlessly, they possess a wonderful power of giving new life and vitality to the countless millions of cells of which every body is composed.

Your Boy's Ambition

Good Teeth will help his Career

Your boy probably has confided to you his ideas as to what he would like to be "when he grows up." Teach him that whatever this may be he will have to be strong and healthy, and that good health depends on sound, clean teeth.

Explain to your boy that the surface of the enamel which protects the teeth is formed into millions of miniature waves and facets (visible only through a powerful magnifying glass) which split up and reflect the light in all directions, just as does a diamond.

This many-angled reflection of light from the hard bright surface of the little facets makes the teeth glisten and look strong and manly.

Of course, if the teeth are not cleaned, the facets get covered with greasy food deposits and could no more shine and gleam than could a diamond covered with mud. Also the greasy deposits ferment and set up an acid which eats into the enamel and causes toothache and decay. Therefore, teeth must be cleaned thoroughly at least twice a day. For this purpose Gibbs Dentifrice is ideal.

Gibbs Dentifrice washes away all food deposits, polishes the enamel without scratching the delicate facets, ensures a lifetime of good teeth and keeps the mouth sweet and wholesome always. Leading British dentists endorse this fact.

Let your boy experience for himself the refreshing benefit of Gibbs Dentifrice. Buy him his own case to-day.

Gibbs Dentifrice

Large size 1/-. *DeLuxe* 1/6
Refills for above ... 11d.
Popular Size ... 7½d.
Tubes ... 6d. & 1/-

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(Sequel to "Ivory Castle Fairy Book") **FREE!**

Send for a copy of Gibbs NEW BOOK, "THE FORTRESS OF IVORY CASTLES"—an enthralling fairy story. The children will revel in the 36 beautifully illustrated pages, and in the adventures of Peter and Pearl and all the quaint and wonderful characters. With the "Fortress of Ivory Castles Fairy Book" is sent a useful size sample of Gibbs Dentifrice. Simply write your name and address clearly on a sheet of paper, enclose 3d. in stamps for packing and postage, and post to D. & W. GIBBS, Ltd. (Dept. 1-BE.), Cold Cream Soap Works, London, E.1.

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Whether your summer pastime is tennis, cricket, golf, boating, or tramping, you'll appreciate the unusual comfort of this specially designed AERTEX one-piece garment.

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Removes Finger Prints.

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"We were visited by burglars last week, but after turning our house upside down and spreading my jewellery, silver toilet things, etc., all over the floor, the only article they thought worthy of taking was the Ciro Pearl necklace I got from you last month." (Simla.)

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"The day after the Ciro Pearls arrived we went to a dance, and everyone thought they were real pearls. They were greatly admired, and some friends told my wife to be careful with them as there had been so many robberies lately, and it was dangerous to go about with such expensive pearls!" (Monte Video.)

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On receipt of One Guinea we will send you a necklet of Ciro Pearls, 16 inches long, with gold clasp, in dainty box, or any other Ciro Pearl jewel in hand-made gold settings. If after comparing them with real or other artificial pearls they are not found equal to the former or superior to the latter, return them to us within 15 days and we will refund your money.

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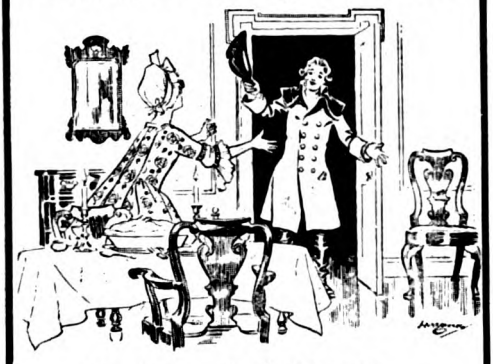

Sing a song of RONUK,
Housewives all agree,
Here's the stuff to make your floors
Shine continually.
When the door is opened
Brightness meets your sight,
What a highly polished home
To welcome you at night!

RONUK
FLOOR POLISH

It protects the surface because the wear is on the Ronuk—not on the Lino. It polishes, preserves and purifies.

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The Domestikatum Boiler

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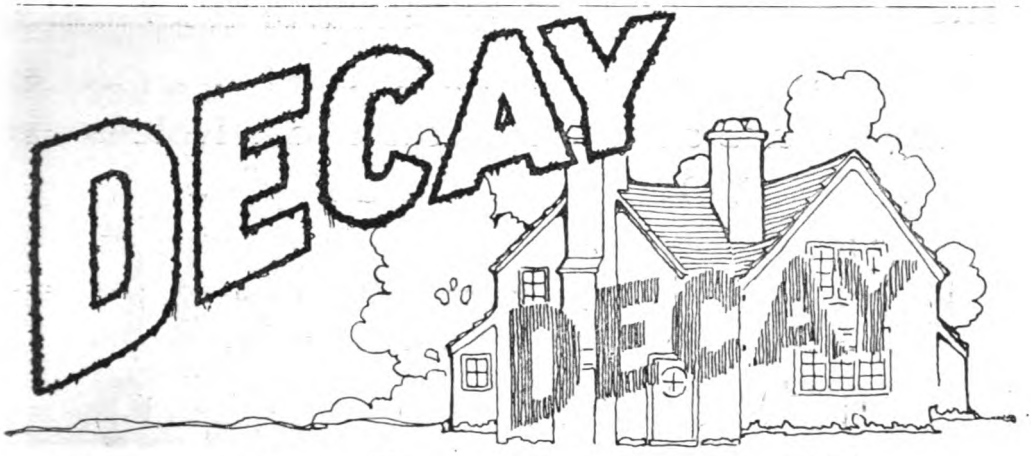
Then get a tin of Harpic to remove all stains from the W.C. Bowl absolutely without scouring. **See that you get HARPIC.** Just a sprinkle of Harpic in the W.C. bowl at night, and a flush in the morning, leaves the porcelain sparkling white. Harpic combines low price with greatest efficiency. Of all Chemists, Ironmongers, Grocers and Oilmen, Boots' Branches, and all large stores. If your dealer does not stock, send us his name and address, we will send you a free sample tin.

Dept. 14 L. Harpic Mfg. Co., 1 Avenue Road, London, S.E.5.

"HARPIC"



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All leading Decorators will gladly use PINCHIN, JOHNSON SUPER-FINISHES—many prefer to do so, knowing that there are no materials to equal them for rich effect, fine color selections, durability and PROTECTIVE VALUE.

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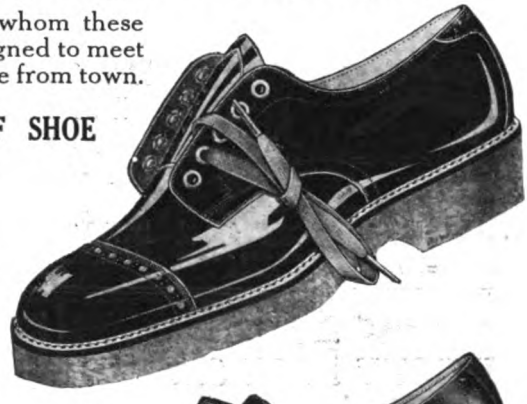
Abbott's Shoes are for men to whom these things mean living. They are designed to meet their special needs in every escape from town.



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The Phit-Eesi Special Model of a manly Shoe for walking—touring—seaside or country wear. They are cut in one piece to ensure the maximum of comfort. The soles are made from a good stout ⅜-in. English bend with extended heels. Stocked in Tan Willow Calf and soft Black Box Calf leather. **28/-** Postage 1/-

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Watts's Patent Wardrobe Fitting

Trebles the Capacity of any Wardrobe.

Two or more may be fixed side by side in a large wardrobe.

Thousands of wardrobes in this country are being used to the fullest advantage because they are equipped with Watts's Patent Wardrobe Fitting. This is an ingenious contrivance which puts order into the wardrobe. It is quickly and easily fixed as shown in the illustrations and there is nothing to go wrong. The lower portion extends on roller bearings, and at a touch the clothes slide right out into the light, making easy the selection of any garment.

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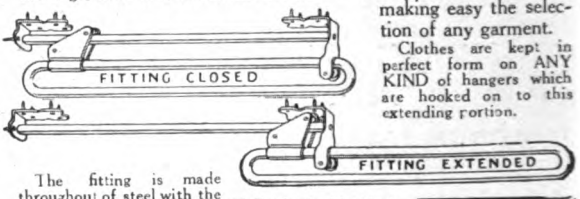

Its application to a small wardrobe.

How a shelf or alcove can be made into an up-to-date wardrobe.

The fitting is made throughout of steel with the upper rail and brackets beautifully finished in black oxydised copper, the lower extending portion being heavily nickel-plated and polished. When ordering state inside back-to-front wardrobe measurement.

SIZES AND CAPACITIES.

Fitting Closed	Accommodation
10 inches	6 Suits
11 "	6 "
12 "	7 "
13 "	8 "
14 "	8 "
15 "	9 "
16 "	9 "
17 "	10 "
18 "	11 "
19 "	11 "
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JOHN WATTS,
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Hangers from 1/6 each.

Permanent exhibition of Trousers Presses, Wardrobes, Wardrobe Fittings & numerous specialities for the care of clothes at
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COMBINATION, ready for the road,

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THE CRIGG MOTOR & ENGINEERING CO., Ltd.,
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"Stropping and honing and painful scraping over the skin are unnecessary evils you experience every time you shave.

"Use the New Improved Gillette. It is a razor that combines efficiency with economy, and gives perfectly smooth, easy shaves. And remember, too, that the Gillette is ready for work when you are—no stropping, no honing, no trouble at all—just lather, then shave.

"Do as I have done—simplify your morning shave; convert an irksome business into a pleasant job with the New Improved Gillette, and you'll never regret it."

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By Appointment to His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales.

NEW STANDARD (*as illustrated*). Triple silver-plated New Improved Gillette Safety Razor, Metal Box containing 12 double-edge Gillette Blades (24 shaving edges) in Genuine Leather Case, purple velvet and satin lined - - - - - - - - - **NOW 21/-**

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Gillette Blades in packets of 12 (24 shaving edges) - - - - - - *Reduced Price* **4/6**

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NOW 21/- AND UPWARDS

The New Improved **Gillette** **Safety Razor**

KNOWN THE Gillette WORLD OVER

NO STROPPING NO HONING

Drink your own health every day in

MINERAL SPRING HEALTH GRANULES

THERE they go — off to school, "chattering like starlings" and as merry as the day is long. It's all because of "Mineral Spring" Health Granules, the delightful sparkling, daily drink that purifies the system and keeps it up to "tip-top" efficiency in Nature's own gentle harmless way.

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"Mineral Spring" is especially suitable for ladies and children.

Sold in **1/-** *and* **2/-** *wide-topped tins, which keep it dry and easily admit the spoon.*

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"Nature alone won't wave the hair,
Hinde's Wavers, too, must do their share."

HINDE'S HAIR WAVERS are supplied in 26 different patterns. Crude imitations which are hurtful to the hair may be sometimes offered. It is necessary to see that the name HINDE'S is on each article. Obtainable at all stores, hairdressers and drapery houses.

SAMPLE WAVER 8d. POST FREE.

Hindes', Limited, Manufacturers of Hair Brushes and Articles for the Dressing Table.
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Magic

Lies in pretty teeth—Remove that film

Why will any woman in these days have dingy film on teeth?

There is now a way to end it. Millions of people employ it. You can see the results in glistening teeth everywhere you look.

This is to offer a ten-day test, to show *you* how to beautify the teeth.

Film is cloudy

Film is that viscous coat you feel. It clings to the teeth, enters crevices and remains. When left it forms the basis of tartar. Teeth look discoloured more or less.

But film does more. It is regarded as a potential source of most tooth troubles. It holds food substances which ferment and form acid. It holds the acid in contact with the teeth and the acid may cause decay.

You leave it

Old ways of brushing leave much of that film intact. It dims the teeth and, night and day, threatens serious damage. That's why so many well-brushed teeth discolour and decay. Tooth troubles have been constantly increasing. So dental science has been seeking ways to fight that film.

A new-type tooth paste has been perfected, correcting some old mistakes. Two film combatants are embodied in it.

Avoid Harmful Grit

Pepsodent curdles the film and removes it without harmful scouring. Its polishing agent is far softer than enamel. Never use a film combatant which contains harsh grit.

The name is Pepsodent, and by its use millions now combat that film.

Two other foes

It also fights two other foes of teeth. It multiplies the starch digestant in the saliva. To digest starch deposits on teeth which may otherwise cling and form acids.

It multiplies the alkalinity of the saliva. To neutralize mouth acids as they form.

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Whole lives may be altered by this better tooth protection. Dentists now advise that children use Pepsodent from the time the first tooth appears. It will mean a new dental era.

The way to know this is to send the coupon for a 10-Day Tube. Note how clean the teeth feel after using. Mark the absence of the viscous film. See how teeth whiten as the film-coats disappear.

See and feel the new effects, then read the reasons in the book we send.

Cut out the coupon now.

Pepsodent

The New-Day Dentifrice

A scientific film combatant which whitens, cleans, and protects the teeth without the use of harmful grit. Now advised by leading dentists the world over. Sold in two sizes—1/3 & 2/-

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Mail 10-Day Tube of Pepsodent to—

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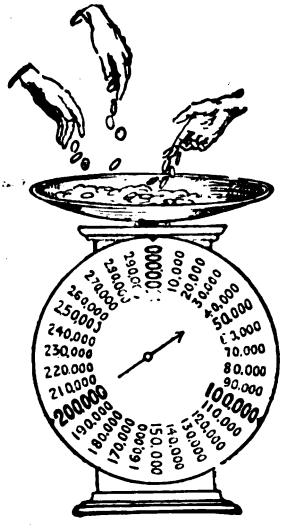
Give full address. Write plainly.
Only one tube to a family.

STRAND MAG./June.

DR. BARNARDO'S HOMES



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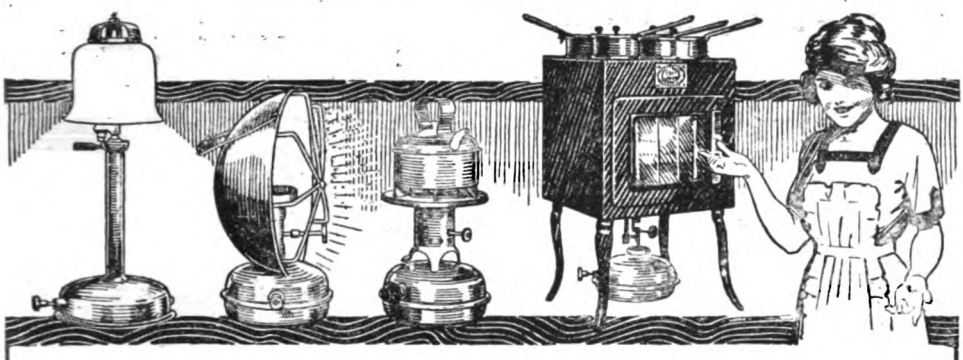

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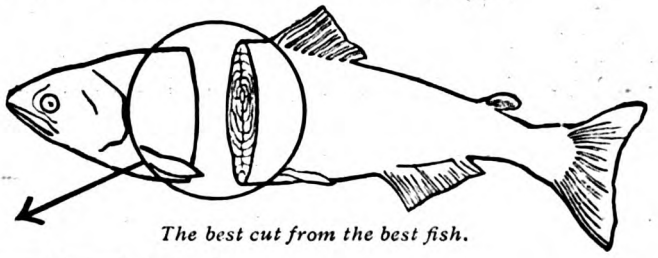

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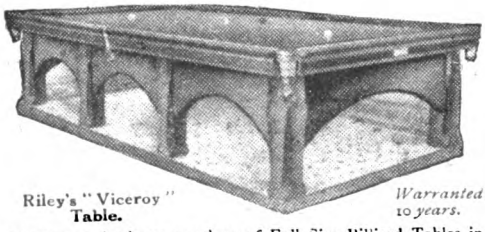

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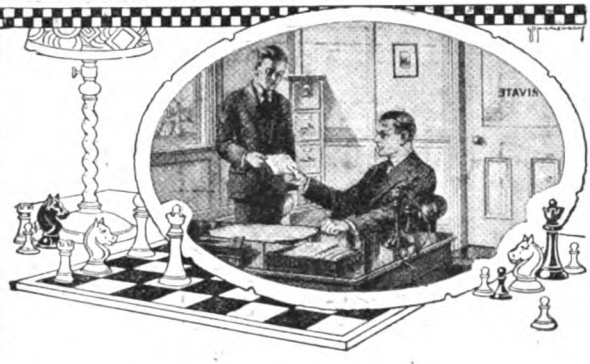

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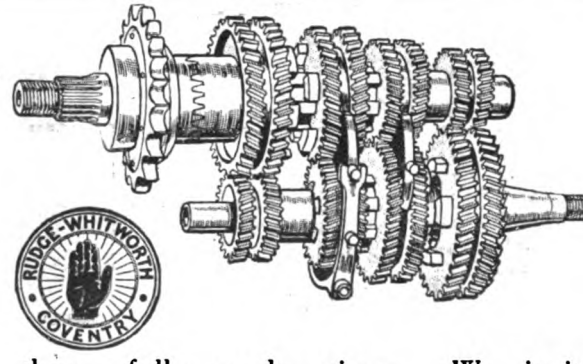

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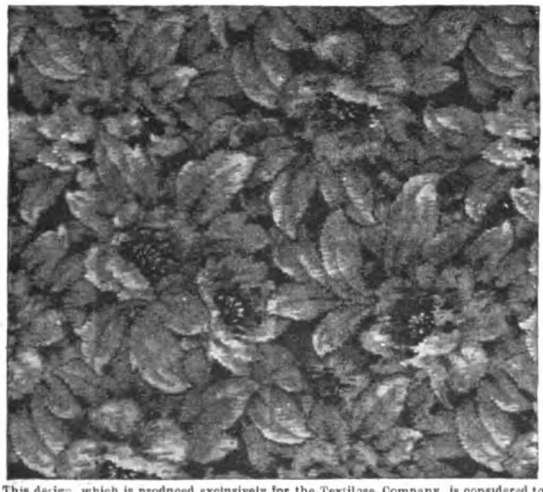

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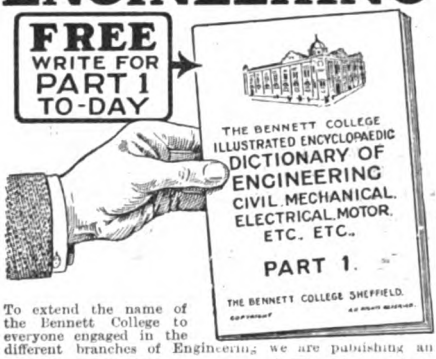

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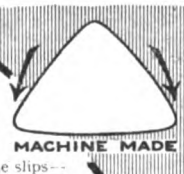

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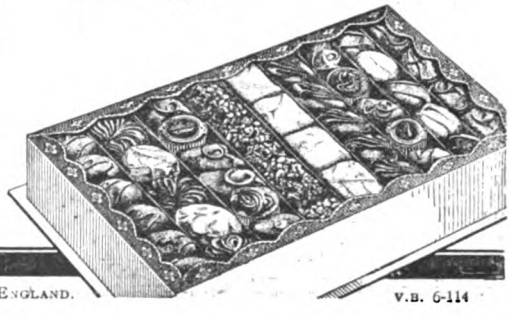

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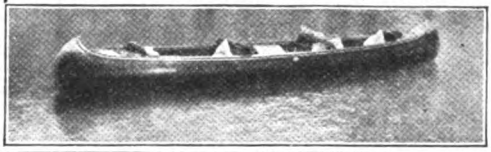

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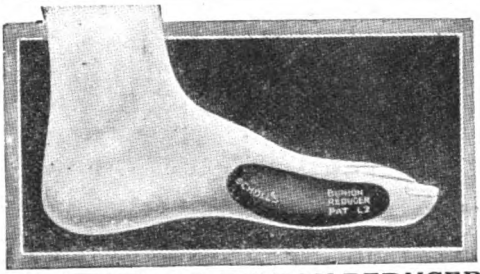

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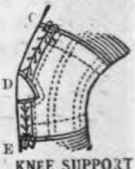

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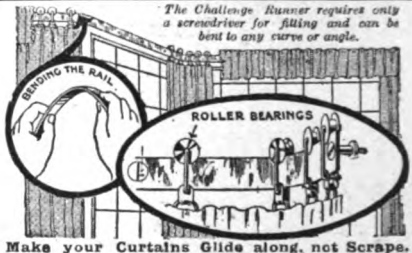

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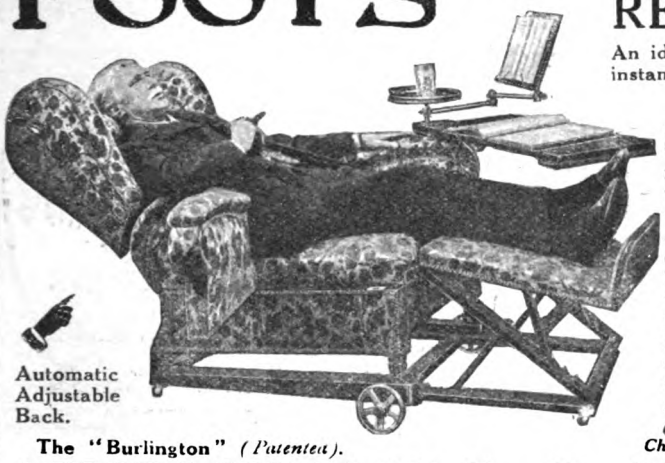

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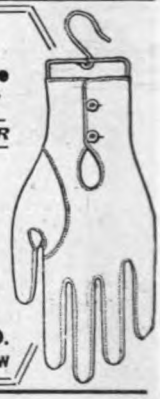

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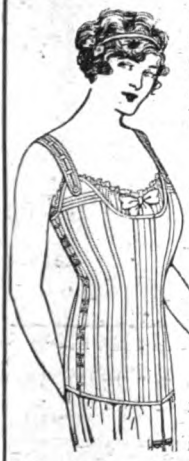

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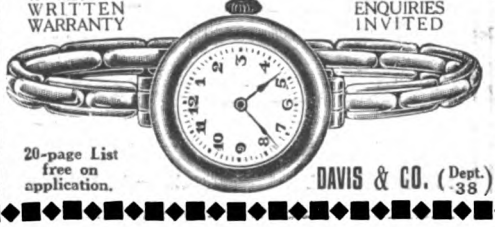

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In view of the continued success of this new discovery in such cases as mentioned above and the day by day endorsement of Doctors everywhere, the preservation of your hair beauty or the restoration of hair in healthy abundance, even in long standing cases, can be guaranteed to those who follow the treatment conscientiously.

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1. It can be taken at home without interference with business or social duties.
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Sir,—Please send me under cover full particulars and consultation form.

Name .....

Address .....

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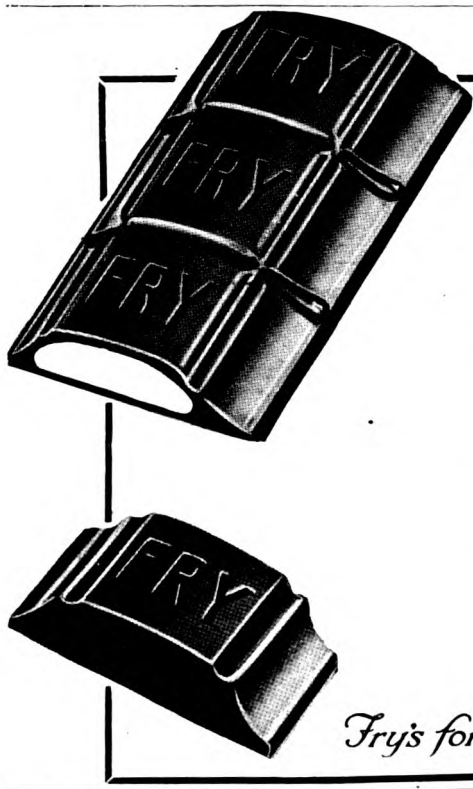
Consultations free 10 to 5.30 daily.

Strand Magazine, June, 1923.



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Goes twice as far as most other baking powders and is therefore more economical.

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Makes bread, cakes, pastry, puddings and pies lighter, more digestible and so delightfully appetizing.

THE STRAND MAGAZINE.

Contents for June, 1923.

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Frontispiece : " He clasped Moyra to his breast and went across Jermyn Street as it may be supposed no other man has or ever will effect a crossing."

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The Index to Volume 65 can be obtained on application to the Publisher.

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IS

NEITHER A CRIME NOR DISGRACE

BUT A

DISEASE

which is treated by Doctors at the Keeley Institute as a Disease. The result is a cure. Patients do not waste their time or money in taking the Keeley Treatment.

"Truth" has completed a searching and independent investigation into the merits of the Keeley Treatment for the cure of Alcoholism and Drug-Taking. In a four-page Supplement special reference is made to the following seven points in favour of the late Dr. Keeley's system :—

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7. The Institute is conducted as carefully as any first-class Hotel or Club. All patients prefer it to a hotel.

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May we also mention that Player's Navy Cut Cigarettes have enjoyed a yearly increasing popularity for over a quarter of a century.

P.1036

Issued by The Imperial Tobacco Co. (of Great Britain and Ireland), Ltd.

To face back of Frontispiece.

You can't *possibly* get wet in the

35/- "Mattamac"

REG'D.

19-OUNCE Featherweight STORMPROOF

Don't risk disappointment with an imitation. Get the *genuine* "Mattamac" Stormproof which is *labelled* "*Mattamac*" beneath the Coat-hanger. That is your safeguard against the man who thinks more of his profit than of your satisfaction. . . . Truly, the "Mattamac" Stormproof of universal sale and utility is the best coat of its kind in the World, *and the best coat value procurable.*

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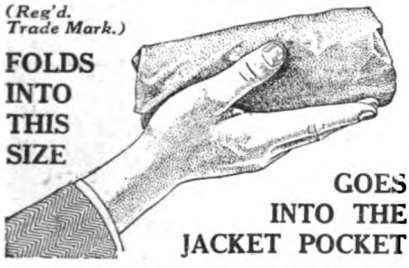
(Reg'd. Trade Mark.)



"Matta" Fabric is intensely strong and exceedingly compact. The Coat worn by the 6ft. Model No. 2 opposite, when folded, just made this handful.

The Trade Mark illustration above is a faithful drawing of his hand and "Mattamac," and the Model Illustrations opposite are, in each case, direct Drawings from Photographs of stock "Mattamac" Stormproofs.

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MADE IN 11 MODELS, 6 SHADES, 40 SIZES.

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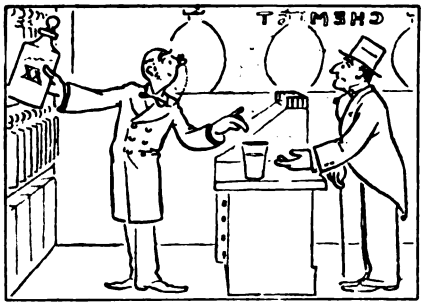
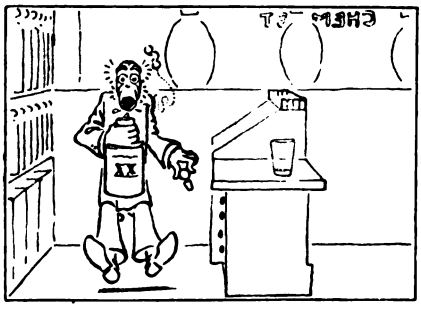
A Throat-clutching Monologue in Eight Exhilarating Episodes.

By "FOUGASSE."

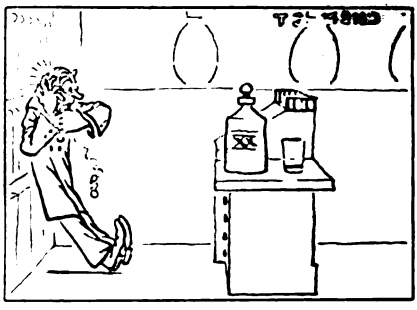


1. Ten grains of aspirin? Yes, sir. Thank you, sir. Good morning.

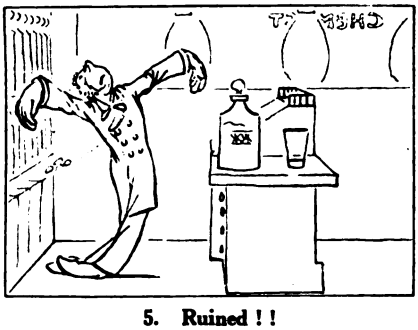
2. Now *was* that aspirin I gave him?



3. *No!! ARSENIC!!!*

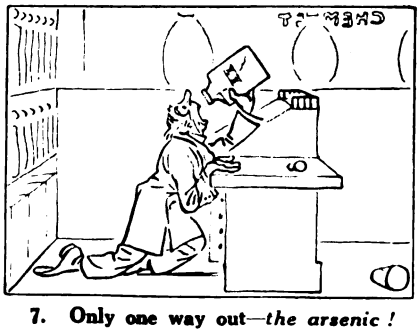


4. I've killed him!

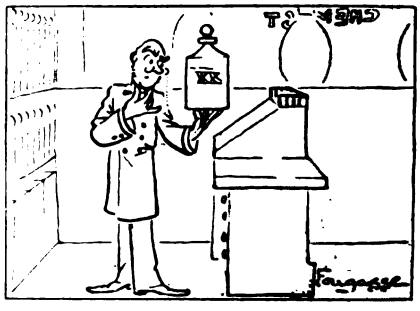


5. Ruined!!

6. Disgraced!!!



7. Only one way out—*the arsenic!*



8. Tut, tut, tut!—so it *is* aspirin!

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There is only one way of avoiding the inevitable unpleasantness—you must use with regularity the fragrant, hygienic *Poudre de Santé*.

Its daily use counteracts the irritating effects of the sweat-secretion on the tender skin, absorbs the inconvenient moisture, and acts as an instant and permanent deodorant. Its effect on the skin is bracing and beneficial, and a thorough dusting after the morning bath will keep the body cool and sweet through the most strenuous day. It is a necessity to dancers and sportswomen, and indispensable in the tropics.

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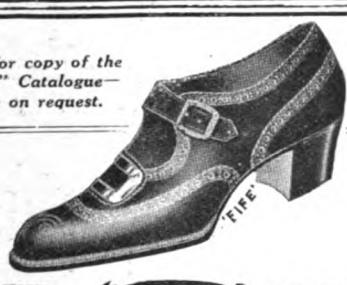

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Miss Gladys Cooper Explains Some Beauty Secrets

The Popular London Star Favours Simple Methods.

I have been asked to give a few simple recipes that I know, either through personal use or by observation, to be valuable to the toilet, and which are within the reach of the average woman. In these days of £100 facial treatments and elaborate and expensive beautifying processes my suggestions may read like lessons in economy, but they are not especially so intended. They are merely practical suggestions, in which the keynote is "effectiveness." All the materials or ingredients which I mention are either already at hand in the home or may be readily procured from the chemist. Fortunately I do not suffer from the ailments or troubles enumerated below, but some people who are not so fortunate have told me their experiences, and with your permission I will set forth some remedies which they have found to be efficacious.

Home Made Hair Tonic.

My acquaintances say that a good stimulant to the natural growth of the hair is boranium. A very simple, effective and safe stimulating lotion is made up by mixing one ounce of boranium with ½ pint of bay rum. This may be applied to the hair roots occasionally with the finger tips with good results.

Complexion Renewals.

Complexion experts advise me that a normal, healthy complexion is constantly renewing itself by dropping off tiny flakes of worn-out tissue, thus revealing the fresh young skin underneath. They say that when this process is checked by age, exposure or some of many causes, the complexion becomes dull and ugly. The rational treatment recommended is to help the skin perform the natural functions of "shedding" worn-out tissue. For this purpose, I am informed, there is nothing so good as pure mercolized wax, used for a few nights, just as you would use a face cream. It is claimed that it possesses a special affinity for the effete scarf-skin, which it quickly removes by absorbing it. The face, I am assured, will soon look much younger and prettier under this treatment.

The Curling Iron.

Don't use a hot iron to curl your hair. Some of my friends make the cunningest sort of curls wherever they want them, simply by dampening the hair with liquid silmerine before retiring at night. When the hair is dry in the morning it will be softly curly just where you want it to be. This method is perfectly harmless, even beneficial to the hair, and the curls last a long time. The liquid is quite pleasant and neither sticky nor greasy.

How to Shampoo.

Most women, I am informed, do not know how to use stallax properly when shampooing with it. Unless the hair is naturally very oily, a stallax shampoo may sometimes leave it rather dry. But I am told if you will apply olive oil freely to your hair and scalp just before shampooing with stallax, the result is most delightful. The hair will be left clean, soft, bright and wavy, the olive oil having properly balanced the action of this wonderful hair cleanser.

Care of the Hair.

Dandruff, I am told, is the greatest enemy of the hair. I am informed that in many cases no hair tonic is needed, if only the scalp can be properly cleared and kept free from dandruff. Nature will usually do the rest. I believe a very excellent and very simple remedy for dandruff is a lotion which can be made up at home merely by mixing two ounces of the pure extract of barsyde with three ounces of bay rum. Rub into the scalp occasionally with the finger tips. The prompt and thorough manner in which it clears off the dandruff and stimulates the scalp is quite remarkable, so they tell me.

Miss GLADYS COOPER.

Photo] [*Wrather & Buy.*

Grey Hair.

I have observed many attempts of many people to conceal grey hair. Some of these experiments were amusing, some disastrous, and some were successful. Personally, I believe I shall let my hair turn when the appointed time comes, but if I were going to try to evade it, I would give a trial to a real old "grandmother" formula that would probably do the work. This formula, I am informed, has been used with degrees of success for many generations, and consists merely of one ounce of concentrate of tammalite mixed with four ounces of bay rum. It is applied to the grey hair a few times with a small sponge, and ladies tell me it appears to darken the hair to a natural shade, not like a dye, but gradually and naturally.

Miscellaneous Hints.

A few useful hints from my friends on aids to beauty, are as follows:—

The eyebrows and lashes may be made to grow stronger and darker by applying mennaline, a specially delicate pomade, with the finger tips at night.

Rouge is often obvious, and many women therefore prefer to use powdered colliandum, which gives a most natural tint.

The lips may be prevented from drying and chapping by touching them with a stick of prolactum, which also gives them a good colour.

Freckles are most effectively combated with ammoniated mercury creams, of which jettaline is the best.

Gladys Cooper

NOTE.—This interesting article on beauty culture n general was written by Miss Gladys Cooper at the request of the manufacturers of Pilenta Soap—the best complexion soap in the world. On sale at all chemists.—ADVT.

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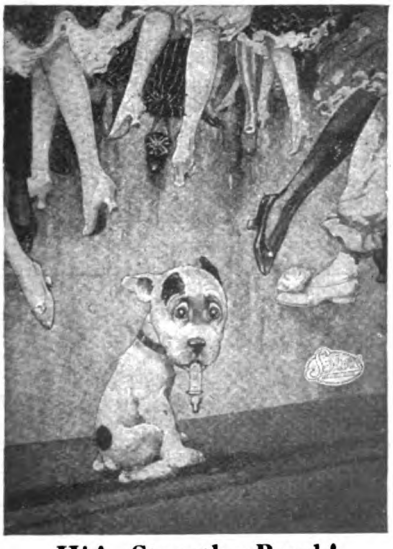

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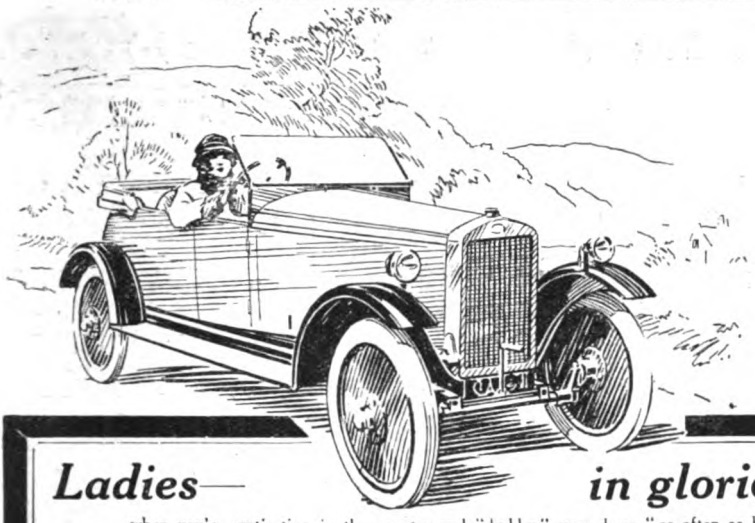

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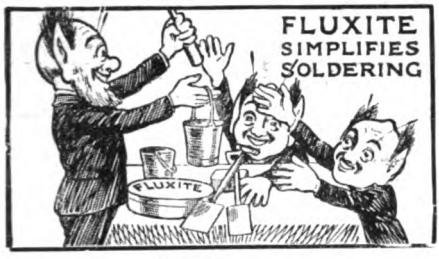

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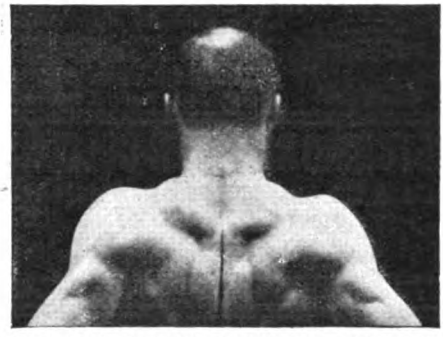

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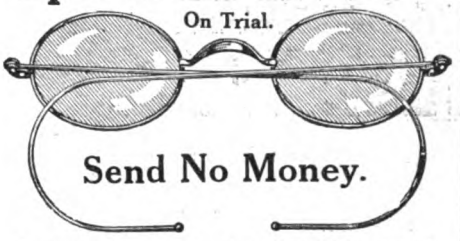

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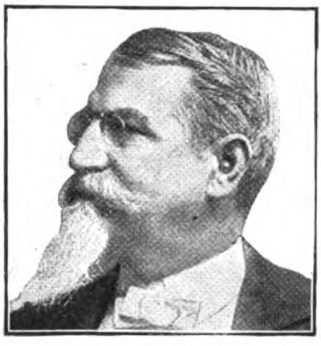

After hair growth.

INDIAN'S SECRET OF HAIR GROWTH.

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At a time when I had become discouraged at trying various hair lotions, tonics, specialists' treatments, etc., I came across, in my travels, a Cherokee Indian medicine man, who had an elixir that he asseverated would grow my hair. Although I had but little faith, I gave it a trial. To my **amazement** a light fuzz soon appeared. **It developed day by day into a healthy growth,** and ere long my hair was as prolific as in my youthful days.

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